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THE BATTLE OF LONDON

THE Blitzkrieg on London has revealed the strength and also the defects of Britain. The R.A.F. has performed astonishing feats in bringing down German aeroplanes, in bombing Germany and above all, in attacking the concentrations of barges and men intended for the invasion of Britain. If invasion now looks unlikely for this autumn, it is partly that once again an Armada has been buffeted by gales, but more that a British fleet, this time of aeroplanes, has forestalled the threatened attack. Against night attacks over London, however, the R.A.F. can still do little, and the belated use of the anti-aircraft barrage is more effective in restoring confidence than in checking the raiders. It would not surprise us if necessity stimulates, before long, the discovery of a remedy against this form of attack, just as it did in the last war when submarine warfare threatened to starve us out. In the meantime Londoners have had to face the type of bombing for which full preparation was supposed to have been made just a year ago. The number of deaths from air bombardment has been far less than the authorities expected; the total casualties are indeed small in comparison with those suffered on any battlefield in a similar period of the last war. But we have not yet learned to regard civilians, men, women and children as "in the front line," however often we repeat that tag. And we have not discovered how best to run the life of a great city when sleep and production and communications are interrupted and destruction comes to buildings of all types from streets of crowded dwellings in the slums to great department stores, offices, stately houses and palaces in the West End.

The best part of British organisation has been the human part. Books could be filled with the really astonishing feats performed by rescue parties, A.R.P. workers, firemen and men and women ambulance drivers. The hospital services, themselves among the worst sufferers from the raids, have been beyond praise. Most dramatic of all is the work of bomb disposal units; the feat by which St. Paul's was saved this week will stand, whatever the future, as one of the great deeds of history. We have seen wonderful sights of co-operation; fire parties from all parts of London, made up of all sorts of people—suburban householders, small tradesmen, East End Jews and spectacled clerks—have co-operated with amazing bravery and great efficiency in fighting the inferno of the blazing docks.

That is on the good side. An article we publish this week by Mr. Ritchie Calder gives an authoritative picture of the unhappy failure in East London, where the proximity of the docks and the criminal overcrowding and miserable condition of sordid houses would in any case have condemned the population to an ordeal far more terrible than any West End resident is likely to suffer. The failure in East London was due, as Mr. Calder makes clear, partly to chance, partly to the inefficiency of some of the authorities concerned, partly to the confusion and overlapping of authorities whose functions were not clearly defined, and partly to the fact that the number of uninjured but homeless people to be cared for was much larger than anyone had anticipated. The worst tragedy took place in a County Borough; its officials and representatives, who have, unlike neighbouring authorities, the advantage of comprehensive powers, seem to have been quite inadequate to their task.

The ghastly events of the last weeks in these areas of East London necessitate, as Mr. Calder suggests, drastic changes. It is good to hear that a definite promise has now been made by the Minister of Health to commandeer empty houses, whoever they belong to, for the benefit of refugees from bombed areas. The big empty homes of the rich in the West End are, we are told, to be let to homeless people who need them at rents that they can pay. We shall be glad to hear details of such schemes when they are actually accomplished. On the question of payment to homeless people it is good to learn that the Assistance Boards have been neither dilatory nor niggardly; in only one case have we heard of complaint on this score, and there inquiry showed that the cause was a bomb which practically wiped out all the staff at one Centre. The feeding arrangements, the provision of hot meals and so on, have improved, but East London is clamouring for communal feeding centres. A host of other questions, dealing with compensation, evacuation and shelter policy want immediate handling. The L.C.C., in the wide area it covers, is efficient, but has only partial powers, and the districts that most need

overhauling are outside its jurisdiction. We hold, with Mr. Calder, that the first need is a Welfare Board for London with full financial and other powers to clear up the present muddle. Until this is done it is hypocritical to talk, as solemn people do, about the " morale " of the East End. The East End is now asked to bear what is intolerable ; only when the poor have decent shelters, as much chance of sleep as other people, proper compensation for loss and proper provision for the homeless, have we any right to expect them to co-operate in a war " for freedom " or for a " civilisation " whose advantages they can scarcely at the moment be expected to feel.

Round the Mediterranean

Napoleon may have laid down the pattern for Hitler's next move, as for much else in Nazi tactics. If it should turn out that our bombing of the French coast and the westerly gale have together delayed the invasion, he must buttress his prestige by a bold stroke in some other direction. Boney promptly turned his back on Boulogne, marched the Grand Army eastwards and fought at Austerlitz the decisive battle that smashed the combined armies of Austria and Russia. Hitler in the same quandary may concentrate on the Mediterranean, while a great part of our fleet is compelled to watch our own shores. The visit to Berlin, with an imposing staff, of Señor Suñer, who is at once the head of the Falange and Franco's brother-in-law, may be intended to round off his preparations for the Western campaign. In a published statement, the leader of Spanish Fascism stressed its imperial ambitions in Morocco, and treated its claims to Gibraltar as an instalment of justice so obvious that they required no emphasis. The delicacy of this situation, while Franco still hesitates to strike, may explain our passivity this week at Gibraltar, when six French warships were allowed to sail through the Straits unmolested on the way to Dakar. There they may still be exposed to attack, if as is probable their task is to hold the colony against the friends of General de Gaulle. Rumour speaks of riots involving his partisans in French Morocco, which is hardly likely to pass under Spanish rule without resistance. Our chief regret is that nothing has been done, so far as we know, to revive and assist the Spanish Republican opposition. The way to do that would be to give it Gibraltar as its base of operations, in return for Ceuta.

In the Levant, the march on Egypt has begun, but Syria is also a focus of interest. Marshal Graziani's troops have begun their march on Alexandria and covered some eighty miles. They must now advance, in heat which renders a tank barely usable, along a coast road, exposed by sea and land to attacks from both flanks. Our forces, in spite of recent reinforcements, are heavily outnumbered. Egypt, in spite of the violation of her territory, has not yet declared war, but it is now believed that her army, 30,000 strong, will eventually fight on our side. The rains still hold up operations in and round Abyssinia. Are we there doing everything in our power to arm and organise Haile Selassie's men ?

In Syria, meanwhile, an Italian commission, which has arrived in Beyrout, is endeavouring to disarm the French. It is reported that they have refused to surrender their modern planes and submarines. The professional troops are said to favour resistance, but the conscripts are eager only to get home. One need not dwell on the danger to our whole position in the Eastern Mediterranean if the Italians could establish themselves in Syria. The threat to Palestine should be lessened if, as we believe, the decision has now been taken to raise a Jewish army. The Turks also are on the alert, for they could not tolerate the passing of Syria into Italy's possession. Their hands will be free, however, only when they have cleared up their relations with Moscow. That salutary process has begun, with a change of personnel in the Soviet embassy at Angora. To sum up this situation in the Mediterranean : though everything is still in suspense, the lines of two coming campaigns are visible at either end. The timing of the two blows may depend partly on the cooling of the torrid weather, and partly on the drama staged at Dover Straits.

Recruits for Fascism

The Fascist idea is on the march, rounding up stragglers and consolidating the rear. Rumania fell in this week. General Antonescu has proclaimed a totalitarian system, with the more or less Nazi Iron Guard as the only tolerated party. We understand that some of the Jewish minority still survives. The Leader's Ministry is formed from the Guard, diluted by a few semi-skilled professors and officers. Bread is already scarce in this rich exporting area, and Rumanians are ordered to celebrate the new régime by eating it stale. In Japan, also, after some experience of the reality of Fascism, its forms will presently be adopted. Prince Konoe has published a draft of his plans, which begin by creating what the *Times* describes as " a society resembling a political party," and go on to place all the productive and cultural life of the country under two Councils of State, of which the first will control industry, agriculture and labour, the second education, religion, sport and the press. But the army and fleet stand apart, traditional and feudal as ever, and one suspects that the reality of power will still lie in their hands. One cannot create an effective governing party merely by writing its name on a sheet of paper.

The Burma Road

It is well for us to remember while the bombs fall that this is not the only nation which now experiences an air attack, the brunt of which falls on the civilian population. For three years the Chinese people have withstood ruthless bombing with little defence in the air That British people have not forgotten this fact is shown by the widespread response to the China Campaign Committee's resolution demanding the immediate reopening of the Burma road. Many well-known signatures are now appended to the resolution ; and the organisations represented by the signatures amount to more than a million persons. We believe that the British Government now realise that nothing has been gained by this concession to Japan at China's expense and that there is some reason to hope that the Burma road will be reopened in the middle of next month when the three months agreed upon expires.

Raids and Production

The concentration of air raids on the London area has one great advantage, which it is to be hoped that Londoners themselves will be able to appreciate. It lessens the interruption to essential war work in other parts of the country ; for the Germans have not so far attempted to combine intensive attacks on London with many large-scale efforts elsewhere. This does not mean that the rest of the country has been free from raiders—much less from alarms ; but the pressure, and the attendant loss of production, have been substantially reduced. They remain, however, serious, the main cause of loss being still interruption of work, rather than actual damage. The factory watcher system has grave weaknesses, which will become more disabling as the days darken and the weather conditions get worse. A watcher on the roof is all very well on a clear day ; but he is practically useless when there are low-flying clouds about. Something better is needed if work is to be continued, as it must be in many cases, until the danger is known to be really imminent. The answer may perhaps lie mainly in a wider dissemination to localities and individual factories of the information possessed by the Air Ministry about the movements of raiders, and in drawing distinctions between isolated raiding machines and whole squadrons of planes making for a single area. But the answer lies also in the adequacy of shelter accommodation not merely in the factories but near the workers' homes. Men cannot carry on under air attack, or maintain production if they do remain at work, as long as they have in their minds the vision of their wives and their homes, and perhaps their children, exposed to attack without any adequate place of shelter at hand. Clearly, the provision of deep shelters is a matter not only of keeping up civilian morale but also of maintaining factory output.

Shelter policy is indeed coming to be the crux of the production problem. With intensive night raiding, it is becoming indispensable that shelters should allow as many people as possible to sleep, and not merely to huddle in heaps without the possibility of proper rest. Anderson shelters and many other types of refuge now in use will become in many cases untenable, except for quite short spells, as the year advances ; and this will mean the crowding of more and more people into the available deep shelters and fortified basements of large buildings. It is, we are aware, a tall order to suggest that the whole population of the working-class districts should be given alternative

and reasonably secure sleeping accommodation. But what short of this will meet the case? The flimsy working-class dwellings which were considered good enough for poor people in times of peace crumple up in dozens when bombs fall near them, even when no direct hit is made. Their inhabitants would be much safer if they went to sleep in the houses of richer people; for these do not, as a rule, tumble down unless they are directly hit. But, as speedily as possible, the Government ought to meet the situation by mass-construction of more roomy and safer shelters throughout the congested working-class urban areas.

What stands in the way of this? Shortage of skilled building labour and of materials are formidable obstacles; and the demands for better protection against air raids necessarily conflict with the demands of the War Office for more defence works and of the supply departments for new factory construction. It seems clear that too much heavy labour, classified as unskilled, has been taken into the Army; for there are acute shortages of bricklayers' labourers, excavators, cement workers, and other types of heavy labour as well as of skilled constructional workers. A large number of such men ought to be released from the Army, at least temporarily, and set to work either on shelters, or on defence works, so as to release civilian workers now employed upon them. Also, every possible effort ought to be made to increase the output of cement (we hear stories that the output could be increased a good deal, at any rate, if more heavy labour were made available) and to insist on the use of substitutes (such as blue lias) in work for which the greater strength of cement is not absolutely necessary.

Compensation

Added to the anxieties of the householder about what is happening to his family while he is at work is the anxiety about what will happen to him if his house is badly damaged or destroyed. If he is buying his house through a Building Society, as in these days is very commonly the case, he has every cause for anxiety. In Monday's *Star* Mr. Gregory, acting Secretary of the Building Societies' Association, kindly told him what to expect. If his house is destroyed, he is still liable to go on paying his premiums to the Society, even if he has to find and rent another house elsewhere. If his house is damaged, he has to pay for repairing it; but if he has no means to pay the builder's bill, the Society may be prepared to lend him the money—of course, at interest. If the house-owner is destitute of all means, payments may be suspended by grace of the Society; but, of course, interest will pile up on the arrears. From the standpoint of the Societies, this doubtless seems merely sound common sense; for, as Mr. Gregory says, "it is manifest that a Society cannot make a loan without interest." Nor can it, unless it is to be indemnified; but Mr. Gregory does not draw what appears to us to be the obvious moral—that the State ought to take over the Building Societies lock, stock and barrel, and, having done so, to make arrangements which will be somewhat more reassuring to the unfortunate householders than the best that Mr. Gregory is able to suggest. He has only one crumb of comfort for the houseowner whose house is damaged. The Building Society has power to enter upon the premises and carry out repairs if the owner fails to do so; but it cannot charge the owner with the cost of such repairs except with his own consent.

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AMERICA'S CHOICE

As citizens of the world we are always concerned in the choice of a President by a Republic that counts its 130 million citizens. But the election in which they will take part five weeks hence will be a major event in British and European history. If in the meantime we have experienced and survived the enemy's attempt at invasion, it may decide our fortunes. "Certainly," the reader may object, "America will play this part, but does it greatly matter from this standpoint which of the two rivals is chosen? Mr. Willkie has shown himself as good a friend of our cause as Mr. Roosevelt, and he appears to be a man of unusual force of character with a capacity for bold leadership." Happily there is some truth in this point of view. The Republicans chose as their candidate an outspoken advocate of the utmost material help for this country. In a hot campaign Mr. Willkie has assailed almost every item in the President's policy except his active measures of support for our war effort. He has stoutly backed the highly controversial Conscription Act which Mr. Roosevelt signed this week, and rebuked those of his own party who tried to weaken it by dilatory amendments. He supported the transfer of the fifty destroyers and we do not doubt that he will himself act on this pattern, should he be elected. How far this reflects any strong personal feeling, we do not know; it was obviously sound electioneering. By an overwhelming majority the mass of the American population is with us to this extent, and its sympathies tend to grow stronger. But we have to scrutinise not merely the words of a candidate but the acts of his party machine. It carefully balanced Mr. Willkie's activism by choosing as its nominee for the Vice-Presidency a decided Isolationist from the Middle West. It listened, moreover, with every outward sign of assent at the Party Convention to a speech by its last President, Mr. Hoover, that Mr. Chamberlain might have delivered immediately after Munich. He agreed that the United States should rearm, but only in order to negotiate on its own account a friendly settlement with Hitler after this war is over. It may be said that there are divisions of opinion in the Democratic Party also, but they did not lead it to neutralise Mr. Roosevelt's appeal by choosing a Vice-Presidential candidate of another school; the dissidents have gone over to the other camp. This presence of two minds in the Republican Party has, in fact, reflected itself in Mr. Willkie's pledge for the future. He has promised unequivocally that under no circumstances will he send an American army to Europe. Mr. Roosevelt was careful to say that he would not do so unless the United States were "attacked." On both sides of the Atlantic that has always been an elastic word.

But the answer to the question, what is Mr. Willkie likely to do? must be sought ultimately in the nature of the forces behind him. His publicity agents have painted him as a simple village lad from Indiana. "The barefooted boy from Wall Street," as Mr. Ickes wittily described him, is one of the shrewdest and most ruthless leaders of the most aggressive branch of Big Business in the America of to-day. The electric power corporations are in this generation what the predatory railway interests and the oil monopoly were in the last century. Mr. Willkie, in his highly speculative finance, was the close associate of the Morgan money power, and that was the chief influence that gave him his present opportunity. Whatever the average voter may expect of him, Wall Street selected him and filled his war-chest for one simple purpose, and that is to make the United States safe once again for profiteering business. His attitude towards the future of European liberty is for him and his backers a secondary matter; his chief concern, as he has himself said, is to safeguard "the American Way of Life," which means capitalistic enterprise unhampered by a meddlesome State. As we read the mind of Wall Street, it still stands where our own appeasers stood eighteen months ago. It does not understand that the new Nazi barbarism cares as little for economic ends as it cares for moral values. It believes that it can tame this monster, trade with it, lend money to it, negotiate with it. A recently published American speculation about the future may express its mind. The prediction was that after this war four Great Powers will divide the earth: the U.S.A., Germany, Japan and Russia. The writer anticipated the disappearance of British sea power, but he believed that America's superiority in natural resources and industrial technique would suffice to safeguard her. He believed, in other words, that Germany and Japan would have to depend on her for loans. That is exactly what the City thought up to the eve of this war. What Mr. Hoover said plainly enough at the Philadephia Convention, Wall Street may still be thinking; if its nominee should be elected, it would doubtless regret the defeat of this country, if that should be our fate: it would shudder for a moment at Hitler's victory. It would call for still costlier arma-

ments at even higher profits. So long as we fought on, it would continue to sell us 'planes and munitions for cash down. But it would not believe what Mr. Roosevelt and his Ministers believe—that if we should go under, America would then have to fight for survival alone. What it would look forward to would be the pacific and profitable use of American economic power to turn the Nazis into dependable and well-behaved clients.

If Wall Street is cherishing any illusions of this kind, there will be sharply defined limits to the kind of help Mr. Willkie would render, if he should be elected. We do not doubt that in that event he would do as much as Mr. Roosevelt has actually done. A wave of popular feeling might even cause him to go a little farther. But we detect in his speeches no hint of the wide humanity that always marked Mr. Roosevelt's international outlook. His horizon is narrower. We recall with gratitude and admiration the many efforts that the President made, long before this war, to recall Americans to a sense of their own greatness, and a perception of their duty to mankind. His speeches have always seemed to be the utterances of a leader who would himself dare to go a good deal farther than the mass of his countrymen. He sees with clear eyes the peril that will confront the two Americas if Hitler should win this war. He knows that the United States would have to defend the Western Hemisphere, it may be, against a joint German and Japanese attack by air, sea and land, and he cannot wish that she should fight alone, without a base or an ally in the Old World. The obvious strategy is to destroy the power of the Nazis at its centre in Europe now; to wait until it could strike across the Atlantic is weakness. How long the American nation will take to grasp this reasoning we cannot estimate. It might perhaps agree to the despatch next year of an army of volunteers to Europe, though it would not send drafted men. Or again, at a suitable moment Mr. Roosevelt might one day intervene with an offer of peace terms, backed by a threat to enter the war against the side which stood out for conquest and domination. In our belief, on the day that America declared war, or even threatened to declare it, the struggle would be decided. All of us understand that the cause she espouses with her colossal resources cannot suffer defeat. This the enemy would grasp at once, and so would the submerged peoples under his yoke. In any event, whatever part America may play in the war, her influence on the settlement and on the economic restoration of Europe must be decisive. In that task the constructive humanity of Mr. Roosevelt would find full scope. A White House that drew its inspiration from Wall Street would tend to reinforce the less generous impulses and the more sinister interests among ourselves.

But it is, first of all, their own domestic future that Americans will determine in this contest. If Mr. Roosevelt should be re-elected, we may expect him not merely to consolidate the insecure gains of the New Deal, but to carry its constructive programme a good deal farther, for even now America lags behind Europe in its social legislation. Mr. Willkie has been careful to say that he does not propose to obliterate the New Deal entirely, but he would certainly whittle and weaken whatever he retains. He has no use for a positive, modern State that plans and builds. The utmost he will concede is that in some degree it should control the abuses of private enterprise. Americans know him best as the man who fought the outstanding achievement of the New Deal, the Tennessee Valley Administration, by every device known to predatory business. What may chiefly interest consumers is that his company had been selling electricity at six cents a unit; the public authority distributed it at two cents. To retain such opportunities for loot, finance has built a vast machinery of propaganda and corruption. It bribes newspapers, buys universities and permeates Congress. It is now making its supreme bid for power in this attempt to send its man to the White House. As a personality he has charm, a quick wit, and a disarming unconventionality. But in the glare of American publicity the record of his many companies has come to light, and it is not pleasing. The story begins with the watering of stock in the boom, and the sale of inflated shares to the public at fantastic prices, that presently slumped, but not before they had added two or three names to America's list of multi-millionaires. Labour fared ill under these companies as employers. They stubbornly refused to recognise the men's unions. They fought by arming themselves with tear gas and hiring thugs and spies from the notorious Pinkerton agency. They herded their employees into "yellow" company unions. Congressional investigation has pilloried several of them for all the customary devices of intimidation and victimisation, which even included, in one instance, the poisoning of one of the men's leaders. There are, in short, many reasons, not all of them self-regarding, that lead us to hope ardently that Americans will break with tradition and give Mr. Roosevelt his third term.

THE WAR IN EAST LONDON

LET us leave off talking about the morale of East London as if it were a different question from the morale of the West End, or anywhere else. In this "Battle of London" I have seen ordinary people behaving with a coolness and resource in the face of danger which one would only have expected from veteran troops. But you do not expect front line troops to stand unarmed, without support, under bombardment.

Here are a few concrete cases which I have investigated at first hand. Recrimination will not bring the dead back to life, and some amends have already been made. But these instances reveal not only that some officials had never imagined what the Blitzkrieg would be like, but also that the existing machinery of local government was unequal to its task and that the conflict of interests and functions of government departments led to tragic confusion. All authorities overlap and none were sure on whom responsibility lay.

The first was a horror which shocked the public and jerked the Government into belated action. It was a tragedy which could have been foreseen; indeed, so obvious was it that this tragedy would occur that three times in one day I appealed to the Ministry of Health to avert it. People on the spot were making equally frantic attempts.

It was the fate of the large numbers of homeless, whole families, who were left by a series of blunders to be bombed to death in a dockland school outside the London County Council's jurisdiction. This area was so vulnerable that the population, with the exception of the effectives, should have been cleared out the moment the Blitzkrieg started. And it started there on the Friday night—the night before the major aerial offensive on London began. Bombs were dropped and a fire started, killing some and rendering many homeless. On the Saturday afternoon and night the docks were attacked and the residue of bombs rained on those slum streets.

Next day I went down to find what everyone had known for two years was inevitable when the bombing of dockland started. I went to the school, which was surrounded by shattered streets, and found there a very large number of homeless. There were aged pensioners. There were the blind and infirm. There were piccaninnies, the children of negro firemen then at sea bringing food for us. There were youngsters I knew by name, the "Dead End Kids" whom we used to exemplify the condition of unevacuated children in a series of articles in the *Daily Herald* nine months ago.

Whole families were there, sitting in queues, waiting desperately for coaches which were to take them away from the certainty of bombs. They had been told to be ready at 3 o'clock. I was still there at five, and women, mothers of young children, were protesting with violence and with tears about the delay. Men were cursing the helpless officials who knew only that the coaches were expected. "Where are we going?" "Can't we walk there?" "We'll take a bus!" "There's a lorry we can borrow!" They clamoured for help, for information, for reassurance. Impotent officials knew no other answer except the offer of a cup of tea.

One mother complained that her children had been forbidden to play in the playground. The official could only say he was sorry and evade her questions. He showed me the answer. In the playground behind the school was a crater. The school hall was a bulging, dangerous ruin. The bombs which had rendered these people homeless had also struck the school that the authorities had made their "rest centre." Note that—the school had already been bombed. So had a church and other buildings in a direct line with it. And I knew, as God is my judge, I knew that it would be bombed again.

It was not a premonition. It was a calculable certainty. These people told me how the bombers had come over the docks, shedding their bombs—one, two, three, four, then a pause as the 'planes banked in a tight turn and that remorseless fifth dropped each time on the same corner.

They spent another night there. Some were moved to another school, the breadth of a street away, to make room for the new homeless. During the third night of raids and terror another bomb got them.

I saw the crater. I saw the rescue men descending into it with ropes around them, saw them pause in a hushed, painful silence, listening for sounds of the living, saw the tomb of whole families, of my "Dead End Kids." Survivors were boarding buses—buses which should have been there two days before. They were struggling for places as crowds clamber at the rush-hour. I spoke to men who had been cursing on the Sunday. They were speechless and numbed now. They and their families had escaped by the breadth of a road, because they had been transferred in time to the other school. The police tried to stop me speaking to them. The Superintendent of the Division came

in person and, ignoring my permits and official authorisation, ordered his men to " put me out of the district."

When the storm broke an inquiry was started. It was found that coaches had been ordered on the Sunday. They had been told to rendezvous at " The George " public house in a neighbouring borough. The leader of the convoy thought he knew " The George," but it was in the wrong borough. The coaches went home that day.

Coaches again arrived at the school on the second day, but as the homeless were boarding them the sirens went. Local officials decided to abandon the transfer that day and attempt it the next. The next day was too late.

If that were the only instance of ill-conceived plans it would be more than enough. But it was only the worst of many. Schools have been a common target for the Nazi bombers, as common as hospitals, poor law institutions and churches. Schools, however, are the only buildings in the densely populated East London which can serve as centres large enough and accessible enough for large numbers of people. They were selected as " First Line Centres." The " Second Line Centres " were church halls.

That schools would have to be used has been accepted in official plans ever since the possibilities of a Blitzkrieg were considered. Yet the Public Assistance Committees had no powers to make them safe, no powers to equip them with beds and bedding, no powers to provide equipment for hot meals. Only a deplorable minimum of blankets were provided. All expense was curtailed because it was assumed that the homeless would go to them to rest for a few hours after the raid and receive a cup of tea and a sandwich meal.

I saw one of these centres in another Borough. It was appalling. Bare and bleak, with the homeless huddled on the floor, it had no protection except brown paper strips on the windows. The windows were large, and mothers had spent the night before crouched on all fours above their sleeping children, to shelter them from flying glass. The alternative (it was the official arrangement) was to go out into the raids which had rendered them homeless a few hours before and find a proper shelter under arches some streets away. I saw a " rest room "—intended to give peace and quiet to the sick and ailing, or the aged, or the exhausted children. It was unfurnished.

That school was closed as a centre. It was fortunate. A bomb dropped near it a few days later.

When the grim realities were forced upon the Government hurried sanction was given for unlimited expenditure. Blankets were to be supplied to full capacity but the Public Assistance Authorities, which had been urging this since before the war, found that blankets and bedding were hard to come by. The Government certainly supplied thousands out of stock. The ruins of Public Assistance Institutions were searched for water-sodden bedclothes.

Hot meals were authorised. The schools were not equipped. Gas and electric supplies had been interrupted. Other kinds of ranges were almost unobtainable. No one thought of sending in the Army with field kitchens to succour the homeless as the United States Army did in the case of the Mississippi floods. Outside caterers were called on to bring down ready-cooked meals. But it was not long before it was demonstrated that such supplies can also be interrupted.

That does not exhaust the story of cumulative misfortune of the homeless. With a tireless young clergyman I went through raids to shelters seeking out the untraced homeless. We went into the crypt of a dockside church, where men, women and children were sheltering under the arches, in yellow candlelight, like Early Christians in the catacombs of Rome. I flashed a torch around and read above their heads, " This is the Family Vault of . . ." They shared sanctuary with the dead. " Are there any homeless here? " called out the clergyman. There were hasty, anxious " Noes." Those who were homeless were afraid of being turned out because they were using it as a permanent shelter. " Because if there are, they should . . .," and he told them how to go about finding billets, how to get financial help from the Assistance Board, where to get a meal, and so on.

Many of these homeless had trudged round the streets trying to find help and guidance. Places where they might have got information were out of commission. They had to go elsewhere, to be directed somewhere else until they despaired. I can understand their helplessness because I stood in the crowded waiting-room of the billeting department of a certain borough. There were two clerks paying no attention, because the person whose job it was to deal with inquiries was busy. Some were in that waiting-room for four hours and at the end got, not billets, but forms to fill up or the advice " to go and find a house on their own."

Father Groser, that militant, indomitable clergyman, who in the raids sleeps under railway arches with the East Enders, is one of these grand East End clergy who helped to save a worsening situation. The police and wardens in the beginning had to send the homeless to these clergymen for help. And John Groser, of the flying cassock, assumed his own powers. He broke into an official food store to feed the homeless in his " Second Line " (then very much " First Line ") centre. With Jimmie Hall, M.P., he rushed around trying to solve the hopeless question of billeting. The local council did not know what powers there were to billet outside the borough (and billeting in the borough was fantastic). Neither did the local P.A.C. officials. Father Groser and Mr. Hall stormed into Whitehall and began a six-hour fight. They besieged the Ministry of Home Security and the Ministry of Health, seeking audience and information until a helpful subordinate suggested that the L.C.C. " probably had the powers." That was so.

Local authorities had been " circularised " *ad nauseam* until circulars lost their meaning. They were dealing with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Home Security, the Regional Commissioner, the Ministry of Food, the Assistance Board, the Regional Information Officer, the Metropolitan Police, the L.C.C., and voluntary organisations on the questions arising from the raids.

Few of them grasped the complications of billeting. Later it was clarified. London and the surrounding parts were to be treated as a whole. Homeless people could be shifted from one borough to another or into the surrounding counties.

Evacuation was admittedly difficult. Coaches would arrive to clear a centre only to find that half of the homeless were not prepared to go until they had " talked it over with the old man " (who had gone off to work from the centre) or with absent members of the family. Those who vaporise about " East End morale " should remember that whatever the sufferings and privations, whatever the risks of bombs, the family unit in the East End is more precious than life itself. I have heard mothers say soberly, " We'll move together or die together." Many will blame them, as we blamed them for not sending away their children with school evacuations; devotion to the family unit is a human factor which may be as sublime or as foolhardy as courage itself.

Another complication were the homeless who were evacuated from East London only to be bombed out of their new billets. I met one family of a father, mother, and three children and a grandmother of 79 who had twice been driven out of homes which had been found for them. The bombs had followed them, and they found that the district to which they had been sent had developed its own problems. They hitch-hiked back to dockland, and I found them, uncomplaining, but perplexed, in a shelter. They had to be evacuated again.

Only " genuinely homeless " could be helped under any scheme. And " homeless " was difficult to define. If the home was a mass of rubble it was simple. If the house stood, however precariously, only the surveyor could decide whether it was a " home," and the surveyors were overwhelmed while the householders were strangled with red tape. One victim whom I heard challenged by an official produced as proof positive that his home was uninhabitable the fact that the landlord had not collected the rent. But as I went through wrecked streets I saw rent-collectors on the doorsteps of houses where gaps were covered with tarpaulin and windows were cardboarded, where there was neither gas, light or water, and where a bomb, streets away, might shake down the remains. It was rent day, raids or no raids.

No one had authority to evacuate those who were not homeless, but who were shattered by the raids and desperate to get away from constant bombing. It was left to the clergy to 'phone up country vicars or generous friends and say: " We can't promise any billeting money, but will you have them if I can scrounge a car and petrol to send them to you? " The old and infirm had to be got away. One mayor took it on himself to send large numbers by river steamer to safety.

I have heard Ministers argue, with reason, that people should have stayed in their own shelters, whether brick surface shelters, Anderson shelters, or buttressed basements, instead of flocking to big communal centres, but the fact that they were prepared to go miles, with their mattresses and valuables, to tubes, or to the basements of great warehouses, is proof, if any were required, that the deep shelters, which many of us unsuccessfully urged, ought to have been provided.

The dormitory shelters, in which mothers and children and others actually slept, though it meant queueing up for hours, created new problems, so acute that a Government committee, including Lord Horder, toured them to study the critical health questions involved. That raises other issues of future concern.

Again there was the bomb-disruption of essential services of homes which were still intact, but without cooking facilities; the need for communal feeding was " nobody's business," although the Ministry of Food might have stepped in with immediate and enduring effect. It was a great opportunity which should have been seized, and which might have provided a social compensation for the raids.

I have direct Ministerial assurance that town houses of the wealthy and blocks of luxury flats will, or perhaps have been, already commandeered. If local authorities are loth, through deference to property or to influence, to act, then the Ministry of Health will step in for itself. They will be furnished, even if it means requisitioning furniture from private stores. They will be rented at rates governed by the means of the homeless families. That is a categorical undertaking. Such arrangements are infinitely preferable to billeting.

There is nothing wrong with the spirit of East London. Indeed, it has glorified a grim and bitter episode. Jew and Gentile have been bonded together in common danger and sacrifice. "We must share," said the tradesmen, mostly poor Jews, of the Petticoat Lane district, when they stripped their shops of food, tore up the rationing regulations, and pledged their credit to provide for the homeless. Religions and denominations disappeared in mutual help. The clergy never stopped to ask whether the people whom they, through the efforts of their churches, were placing in homes, were Jews, Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists or atheists. Church crypts and underground synagogues were shelters for all comers. And when it came to "Goodnight" prayers or morning thanksgiving they prayed a common prayer in synagogue or chapel. What I saw restored my faith in religion.

The poor helped the poor, as always. The ordinary folks of East London "held the line." They did not ask for medals, but they had a right to ask for help. Perhaps the turning-point was the barrage, which started on Wednesday of last week. "We couldn't sleep," they said to me, "but who wanted to sleep? We were hitting back. We were not just being 'asked to take it.'" About the same time provision for the victims began to improve. Ministers hurried down to see for themselves. It had a salutary effect—on the Ministers.

The L.C.C. authorities had foreseen much of the calamity. They knew that if the East End were bombed far more damage would be done by each bomb than elsewhere, and that those rendered homeless would have none of the reserves of money or friends elsewhere to make them independent of official aid.

But they had been hampered by the Government's refusal to sanction adequate funds or to give them proper power to override sometimes inadequate local councils.

I suggest that a Welfare Board for London should be immediately appointed to supersede the overlapping and antiquated system of authorities which, with the best will in the world, are quite incompetent to deal with a Blitzkrieg situation. Mistakes now will be unforgivable.

RITCHIE CALDER.

A LONDON DIARY

LOOKING out the other night on a fantastic scene of moonlight and searchlight, of white stars and of red fires in the East I listened to the bombs and wondered how much, honestly, it mattered if most of London were burned down. Had I not always wanted London reborn? If we could get the people away, would not the world be a cleaner, more wholesome and happier place if three quarters of London disappeared in a fire bigger than the one that cleaned out the plague and gave Wren his chance nearly two hundred and fifty years ago? How much of London built since Wren is worth a tear? Wren's London still matters; how deeply one cared about the threat to St. Paul's and how thrilled one was at the heroism of its saviours. Some of the other City Churches matter; there are old fragments which carry history with them; there are, of course, the Regency Squares and the remains of Regency planning; a few modern buildings would be missed. How much more that we could not immeasurably improve upon in rebuilding? What a terrific opportunity! A less crowded and replanned London! If only I could get the people away and then guide Hitler's aeroplanes! How willingly would I see Plaistow and Kensington and Shoreditch and Earls Court consigned to the same glorious bonfire! And what fun to clear away the rubbish round St. Paul's and leave it, as Wren meant, with a great open space before it, a masterpiece as splendid as St. Peter's now that Mussolini has opened the superb vista to the Vatican. Then comes the horrid question whether we have a Christopher Wren about and whether, if we have, we should treat him in rebuilding London even as well as our forefathers did, or whether all the ground landlords and financiers and business folk with their vested interests would be allowed once again to rebuild the Victorian gothic towers and the brick slums that Hitler had kindly demolished for us. A Wren Act of Parliament should be passed at once to begin the replanning of London and no one should be permitted to rebuild haphazard. Well here is a dream of reconstruction to sustain one during the raids and the prospect of a fight that will be worth fighting after the war. But that depends on Hitler burning down a lot more of London and being defeated in doing so. It may happen.

* * *

The Communists were among the first to demand deep shelters and proper provision for the East End. They are entitled to the propaganda they are now making out of the disasters to dockland. The Savoy had no ground for complaint when Mr. Rosen and his friends called and demanded shelter there. Their best reply would have been to welcome their visitors into the shelter with open arms. The *Daily Worker* telling the story said that the delegation was turned out by the police; another observer of the incident who was in the Savoy at the time says that each of the delegates made a very pat stage speech and that they were turned out in the end because the All Clear went. However that may be, it is clear that people who don't want extreme doctrines to grow in the East End must remove the scandals, not curse those who expose them.

* * *

At the week-end I met some of the refugees from East London forty miles out of London. Our village does its duty by them, but does not feel very hospitable. Too vivid a memory of evacuation last September when it proved to be unnecessary and some of the people were dirty and inconsiderate. This is a misfortune, for the refugees who then seemed rather well-to-do and who knew too little of country ways to fit well a year ago, now really are refugees who have lost all they ever possessed. An empty bungalow is found for three families near to us. One family is dirty: some of the children have impetigo. Blankets and mattresses must be found; coal is wanted and though Assistance money is paid out promptly for food, there are a host of problems, not made easier by one family which locks itself in the kitchen so that no one else gets a chance of doing any cooking. In the evening the men come down and the family difficulties seem to be straightening up. One of the men tells me he has lost everything: his job, his furniture, new clothing he had just got for all the family. He wondered what State Compensation there would be, but he was very much on the look-out against charity. An official in a nearby village has been abrupt and called him a "refugee," with a contemptuous emphasis. I have to be tactful about the mattresses, rugs and other things we put into the bungalow yesterday. Another of his pals, quite a different type, comes into the pub and shows that he is wanting no charity by standing everyone drinks as if we were the refugees and eightpence a pint meant nothing to him. Another way of showing that Hitler has not got you down.

* * *

It always seemed unlikely that they could keep people out of the tubes if London was seriously bombed. They ought to have decided at the beginning which tubes were too dangerous for shelters and which could be used. As it is they are packed at nights. The underground staff shows extraordinary patience and kindness. The incomplete underground tunnel which cuts under much of the worst area is now in use, and since tunnels can be very quickly made underground one wonders why the authorities do not quickly scoop out new branches of this singularly safe shelter. The very least dangerous aspect of all this underground and shelter sleeping comes from the risk of epidemics. The doctors are already on the job; something drastic will have to be done to avoid spreading diseases in these airless places from which it is impossible to exclude the sick.

* * *

Please, Mr. Censor, now that bombs have fallen in so many parts of London can we mention that the building of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is no longer in occupation? It is not destroyed, you know, but the police and firemen and the broken glass and crater co-operate to forbid its use, and we would like to explain this to readers and contributors. Yes, we rescued the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica* and *Dictionary of Slang* and the office mascot and we have a delightful excuse for not replying to a lot of tiresome letters. . . . Can't we mention this? Not at present? You are consulting the Air Ministry and will let me know? The *Daily Herald* also suffers from broken windows and the *Evening Standard's* caught it hot? Thank you. Thursday morning, going to press and still no permission and no word to those anxious souls who brood over our physical and spiritual welfare. No sooner had we gone to press than the dailies got their permission, blast them (no, this is no longer an appropriate phrase), and this week we, too, are allowed to refer to our change of address.

* * *

A nasty story reaches me of a suggestion that Parliament,

should adjourn until October—the majority of the Labour Executive are, I believe, against the proposal and I hope the House of Commons commits no such suicidal act. That would indeed be a way of committing suicide more surely than the risk of a bomb. And there need be no risk. The House can meet in safety and tell no one where it is meeting.

* * *

"Weygand?" said my friend, the theologian, "He is a tragic case of a decent man who went wrong from bad theology." "Really?" I said, "Bad politics, I see, and the political dangers of Catholicism have always been more apparent to me than to you. What heresy does Weygand hold?" "Not exactly a heresy," he replied, "but it is because of the spurious teaching of the Jesuits, who really are the gaolers of the Vatican to-day, that Weygand and others like him have been caught by this nonsense about the 'Latin *bloc*'." One of Franco's first acts after his victory, you will remember, was to release the Jesuits and he is largely under their control now. The Dominicans, the most Liberal Catholic group, he wiped out; the Bishop of Tarragona, the only Bishop to refuse to sign the memorial supporting Franco when the rebellion broke out, is still a prisoner in a monastery in Italy. Theologically the dispute turns on the doctrine of the Mystical Body, that is, the living unity of Christ with all Christians in every country. The Dominicans, who emphasise this theological conception, felt that the Church was itself in part to blame for the civil war in Spain and they accepted Republican persecution of the Church as a cross to be borne. They hoped by bravely accepting persecution to win the respect of Christians and remove from their minds the suspicion that the Church itself had failed in its duty and been willing to share in the guilt of the Spanish upper class, the landlords and other oppressors of the poor. This was anathema to Franco who used the persecution of the Church to justify his rebellion against the lawfully constituted Republican Government of Spain. Now Franco and the Jesuits and part of the French Church have built up a doctrine which in effect repudiates the doctrine of the Mystical Body because it tries to limit Christian civilisation to the Mediterranean. Men like Weygand are persuaded that all civilisation is a Mediterranean affair and that in Spain, France, Italy and their satellites Christendom can be saved by repudiating the three enemies of Christ—the Bolsheviks, the Nazis, and the Democrats." "A non-universal view of Catholicism in fact?" I said. "Just so, and the case of false doctrine, leading to false politics."

* * *

In a bus.

Bus conductor: They tell me that what the Germans are dropping on us isn't half what we are dropping on them.

Me: But do you think that can decide anything?

Bus conductor: Never mind, it's retaliation, isn't it? The Bible says "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Me: The awkward thing about that quotation is that the New Testament says just the opposite.

Bus conductor: Oh, yes. If someone smacks you on the one cheek you turn the other? Well I say you ought to give him a kick in the pants!

His suggestion for an effective kick in the pants was that all German pilots captured in this country should be made to dig out unexploded bombs.

* * *

At a foreign embassy yesterday one secretary was heard to say to another: "As petrol begins to get short, they'll have to come to an arrangement. Let the R.A.F. do the bombing of London and the Luftwaffe of Berlin." "Ah," said the second, "the thing is, could they trust Hitler to keep his side of the bargain?" CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to "Chelsea Spitfire Fund."

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

The homeless poor are more likely to be sorry for the King and Queen because their home also has been hit than to be happy at the prospect of better homes for themselves.—*Times.*

"GENTLEMAN LEADER"

Finally General Antonescu has begged the police to be just and considerate towards those in their care. This bidding is in close harmony with the character of the Prime Minister, a gentleman with the heart of a judge and the head of a soldier, who knows England and believes in appeasement before force.—*Times.*

Bombs for Berlin. Fun for our fighters. Under the Empire Mothers' Fund, mothers, grannies, etc., and even adopted mothers are uniting to give aircraft to the nation . . .—Advt. in Personal Column, *Daily Telegraph.*

You want, for a dozen good reasons, to show the world that in *this* war it is still a perfectly good thing to have a bosom . . . we have more letters about brassieres now than we ever had before.—*Daily Mirror.*

YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND THE BOARD

THE coming winter will present us with a new set of dangers, the dangers from strain, overwork and boredom; and two classes of our population are likely to be specially affected, the soldiers in their training camps and the boys and girls in the factories. What steps are we taking to counteract these dangers? The War Office is producing some scheme of adult education, of what dimensions we do not yet know, for the soldiers. For the masses of boys and girls from 14 to 18 in industry, thousands of whom have been moved to industrial areas like Coventry or Barrow, the President of the Board of Education has announced—the setting up of a directorate to stimulate physical training. To an urgent and vital need this seems a rather timid answer.

What alternatives are there? The most widely advertised at the moment is the plan for the appointment of a Youth Commissioner to co-ordinate youth activities through the County Badge Training Scheme. This movement—which enjoys the most distinguished backing and is the *leitmotiv* of the *Times's* educational policy—is, on the surface, attractive enough. The County Badge Scheme is a plan for pre-military training with a syllabus founded on the pre-Hitler German Youth Movements. The Badge itself is a sort of athletic School Certificate, a universal standard, awarded for proficiency in a combination of physical fitness, alertness and adventure. The scheme is, in fact, a glamourised version of Scouting, and its promoters claim that it has proved itself successful, not in industrial areas but—appropriately enough—in the Sudan. The Public Schools are to be drawn in to provide training grounds and camp-sites and to supply the leaders to train the rest. This is, very briefly, the foundation on which the Youth Commissioner is to work. Its glamour is obvious and if a suitably well-endowed Commissioner is chosen—he will, if one can judge from the promoters, have a title, Royal connections and a Church of England background—the glamour will be suitably enhanced.

Now, either this plausible plan will go the way of other plausible youth schemes in this country and become genteelly irrelevant or it will turn in the end into a fully fledged National Youth Movement with its romantic military appeal and its Baldur von Schirach "above all distinctions," to quote the *Times*, "of race, nationality, party, class or sect, with a solid spiritual foundation." For this scheme *can* only be a success as a fully fledged National Youth Movement, and articles and letters in the *Times* and the *Educational Supplement* show that this and nothing less is aimed at. An article in the *Supplement* for August 17th, for instance, headed *Bases of an Empire Movement*, asks whether "a National Youth Movement should be voluntary or compulsory," and concludes that "both these principles must find a place . . . if membership is compulsory, then many of the obligations of membership should be voluntary. If membership is voluntary, then many of the obligations should be made compulsory." So we had better begin asking whether or not we want a Youth Movement in this country.

There are two obvious objections. In the first place, a National Youth Movement presupposes, as the *Times* admits, National Unity. In so far as we have it at the moment, we have it for one specific purpose only, and to pretend that we have it in any larger sense would be false. The only effective answer to a *Times*-sponsored National Youth Movement, in fact, would be a T.U.C.-sponsored Socialist Youth Movement. In the second place, are we not falling into a Totalitarian trap, as soon as we begin to talk about Youth with a capital letter: as if, because the Dodderers failed us, we can hope to be saved by the Tots? There is a false sentimentalism in this Germanic mystique of YOUTH. Granted the Glamour of Youth Movements—and of course adolescents fall for a uniform—haven't we learned yet the price to be paid for this kind of glamour, especially when its second name is "pre-military training?" Certainly the boys and girls of this country have not had a square deal, but a Youth Movement is a short cut in a wrong direction. It offers ready-made "ideals" instead of offering a community about which to be

"idealistic"; it offers military discipline instead of a civil education; it offers part-time adventure instead of a life worth living.

But, it may be argued, something must be done. We can't let Youth rot, out of an old-fashioned liberal fear of totalitarianism. Agreed, but perhaps a solution will present itself out of a less sentimental re-statement of the problem. Thousands of boys and girls from the age of 14, who in a civilised community would still be at school, are overworking in factories. What do they particularly lack? The very kind of thing which our conventional education at present usually offers as "out of school" activities. On the one hand games, sport, physical training; on the other continued formal education. The obvious machinery for supplying this is Day Continuation Schools, which were dropped for insufficient reasons after the last war. Day Continuation Schools may sound drab to Youth Commissioners. But imaginatively conducted they might not appear so to boys and girls from 14 to 18 working all day in the factories. Three half days a week in well organised Day Continuation Schools, where they could play games, get fit, act, sing, dance, read, and if they want to, work for a County Badge, might seem a more attractive proposition to juvenile workers than they do to the managers of upper-class schools, who find their pupils bored with the kind of things they are usually taught.

Day Continuation Schools are the right approach to a solution of the problem, because the first problem of the majority of England's boys and girls is quite simply that they leave school and go into full-time industry at the age of 14. This is a peace-time problem, which the war has only made more acute, and which will still remain to be solved after the war unless we begin, as we could begin, to solve it now. It may well be that physical training is the first requisite for the moment, since good health is the pre-requisite of good morale. And the Board's new scheme might well be the first step. But physical training is by no means enough and it is the great advantage of the Day Continuation School that it can provide much more beside.

Moreover, there are three great advantages which the Day Continuation Schools have over any Youth Movement:

(1) They are ultimately under a Minister of the Crown and answerable to Parliament. This satisfies the first principle of democratic control.

(2) They would be easily adapted into the post-war reconstruction of education. More than that they would be a first and very important step *in* that reconstruction; for it is almost universally agreed, without any prejudice to the raising of the leaving age, that Day Continuation Schools must be an integral part of the reconstruction.

(3) They cannot so easily be used by the well-intentioned to put over any sentimental ballyhoo about YOUTH.

And who should supply these Day Continuation Schools? The Board? Well, there is no denying that that word has pretty drab associations. The Youth Movement offers—or seems to offer—vigour, vision and leadership. The Board offers circulars, sets up "directorates" and grants up to 50 per cent. of expenditure. But "the Board" after all is an abstraction. At the Board, in the L.E.A.'s, on the County Committees, there are vigorous, imaginative people. Put them in charge. Cut through the red tape here, as it has been cut elsewhere. These things can be done, and if the entourage of the Youth Commissioner elect had spent as much time, energy and, above all, influence on bullying the Board, hammering the Board, forcing the Board to move, as they have spent on lobbying for a Youth Movement, the thing might already be done.

Only—and this is highly important—if the Board undertakes this task, it must do it supremely well. It must show that it can compete with any Youth Movement, or the verdict will go against the democratic methods by default. It must give the good authorities a free hand and stir up the bad ones. It must call in the voluntary associations. It must make sure that old-fashioned conceptions of curriculum are thrown overboard; it must produce first-class equipment and plenty of it. This is the Board's big chance to rehabilitate itself, to cast off its reputation for drabness. Let the Board glamourise itself. Miracles have happened.

T. C. WORSLEY

NOISE

I IMAGINE that even members of the Anti-Noise League temporarily forgot their principles in the middle of last week when the bombardment of the air by the anti-aircraft guns began in London. I have met no one who did not consider that noise a good noise—no one except a woman who thought it was being made by German bombs. It gave people the feeling, not of course of safety, but that something more than usual was being done to drive off the enemy. The passive mood changed into the active mood, and that is usually for most people exhilarating. The bursts of fire from the naval guns were music to the ear—infinitely preferable to those nocturnal silences between the thud of one bomb and the rumble of the next or between two aeroplane flights passing overhead.

Association is the cause of much of our pleasure. I find myself beginning, because of its associations, to like a sound that I once thought damnable and nerve-racking—the sound of the All Clear. When I heard it first, I thought it even more hideous than the sound of the air-raid warning, but now, when I hear it, I feel that I have misjudged and that it is *the* masterpiece of modern music. There are times when I prefer it even to the masterpieces of Handel and Mozart.

It is association, I fancy, that leads many people to exaggerate the beauty of the night-sky during these anti-aircraft barrages. Certainly the sky on such occasions is a spectacle to wonder at—new stars appearing everywhere with the brief life of bubbles or of sparks flying from the anvil of some Titanic blacksmith. At the same time, I doubt whether, merely as a spectacle, it comes up to an ordinary firework display. I do not think that the crowds that go to see the fireworks at the Calgary Stampede would see much in it if it were part of the show. At the same time it is associated in men's minds with a sense of rescue—of the turning of the tide against Hitlerism; and so they speak of it enthusiastically as magnificent.

Apart from this, however, who looking at these new stars could fail to be affected in his imagination as he realises that he is a spectator of the greatest battle in the history of the human race? To have heard the guns at the Battle of Trafalgar would have been something for a man to remember to the end of his life; but Trafalgar was nothing to this. It is the magnitude of the occasion more than anything else that makes men look with awe and wonder these days at the night sky. Those who live to see the reign of justice and mercy on earth will tell their children's children of these lights in the heavens.

The sense of greatness, indeed, always stirs man emotionally. A great fire draws half a city to watch it breathlessly. A great tempest, with seas hurled high over the barriers of the shore, holds mortals under a spell like the rages of King Lear. No story of a voyage through kingfisher seas ever moved readers so deeply as Conrad's *Typhoon*. Here the occasion was a great one: it was a contest between the spirit of man and the all but overwhelming forces of Nature. Few of us have any pleasures of association with stormy seas: we associate them rather with peril, discomfort, or sickness. Yet the grandeur of the spectacle fascinates us, and, still more, the grandeur of the spirit of men that battles with wind and water, and wins through to harbour at the end.

To return to noises, however, I was wondering the other day why, if association makes certain noises pleasant to us, no one has ever thought the cry of a baby musical. This, it may be thought, is because we associate the baby's cry with pain, however slight. I doubt this, however. We know perfectly well that the baby often cries merely because it has wakened suddenly or wants to be fed—that its cry at such times is no more an indication of pain than the cry of a seagull. There are parents even who would feel anxious if their babies never cried. Yet

> An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry,

is a noise I have always thought unbeautiful. This may be, of course, because I am never sure whether the baby is in pain or not, and even the faint possibility of its being in pain is distressing.

Still, there are other sounds not associated with pain and even associated with pleasure which strike unpleasantly on the ear. I have many pleasant associations with Siamese cats, but I cannot get to like the Siamese cat's voice. It has a note which is exactly like that of a baby beginning to cry. The other day I was in a house that contained both a Siamese cat and a baby, and on hearing a cry from outside the room I asked the parents: "Is that the baby or the cat?" They both said: "The cat." I said: "I think it's the baby." And I was right. It was, I may say, one of the less ear-offending sounds common to both animals. The voice of the Siamese cat sounds beautiful only at one time—when, hoping for his return at midnight and fearing that something disastrous may have happened to him, you hear at last his voice from the garden—the sweet music of reassurance.

There are other noises, however, just as ugly as the sound of the voice of a Siamese cat, which seem to give continual pleasure merely because of pleasant associations. Many people like to hear a dog barking—at least in moderation. To me this is one of the most excruciating noises in Nature. It is an assault on the nerves through the ears. I sometimes wish dogs were born without vocal cords

Yet such is the love human beings bear these animals that they will encourage them to bark by the half-hour at the water's edge, throwing sticks into the sea, or pretending to throw sticks into the sea, in order to encourage them to bark louder. If you want to see a man's face beaming in fatuous happiness, you have only to watch a dog-lover amusing himself with a barking dog.

There are, of course, people who love noise for the sake of noise. Nearly all the young do as soon as they have left the cradle. If permitted, they rattle sticks along railings; they beat tin cans; they blow trumpets; they yell at each other at play; they like the noise of a bursting paper bag, of a toy pistol, of a house of bricks tumbling to the floor. In vain the Victorians tried to counter the din of childhood with wise-sounding commonplaces such as: "Children should be seen and not heard." This, it may be replied, was usually a reproof merely to childish conversation at table. But the Victorians knew that, if children were allowed to talk at table, this would be the thin end of the wedge of pandemonium. There was a Sunday-school many years ago in which the prayers were scarcely audible because of the constant uproar maintained by the pupils. As a result, the superintendent—a tall, weak, nervous man in a grey frock-coat and with grey side-whiskers—when repeating the Lord's Prayer always prayed in this fashion: "Our Father, which art in Heaven—'sh, 'sh—hallowed be Thy name—'sh, 'sh," and so on, with a "'sh, 'sh" intervening between every petition and the next.

The love of noise, however, survives childhood in many people. Consider the number of young men in our own land who had a passion for careering through the streets in sports cars to make a noise like violent machine-gun fire. The more noise the car made, the happier they were. I doubt whether the motor bicycle would be so popular if it were not for the noise it makes. Many people, again, would not feel they were getting the best out of their wireless sets unless they played them at full strength even in a small kitchen. Other people laugh ten times as loud as necessary. Others go about the house slamming doors and tramping on floors with sledge-hammer steps. At great football matches the buzzer is one of man's favourite instruments. The Welsh beat saucepans.

I am myself not a noise-lover, though I confess to a weakness for the bagpipe and the drum. But it is possible that the love of noise—or, at least, the tolerance of noise—is a useful characteristic at the present moment. We have been told for a long time that it is noise that wears down the nerves. Yet here we have had an example lately of a tremendous noise that had the opposite effect. It is largely, as I have suggested, a matter of association. Better all the noise on earth associated with friendliness than silence associated with hostility. That explains the increasingly cheerful spirit in which Londoners endured the din and the uproar of the anti-aircraft guns. Y. Y.

M. o. I.

(After Ralph Waldo Emerson)

The Nazis were . . . the first to disclose to the world the fact that a time bomb had exploded at Buckingham Palace and made it look as though the British had been forced into admitting it by the Nazi announcement.—*Daily Telegraph*, September 12th.

If the newsmongers think I fail
Since Britain's news is always last,
Late news to me is one with stale
And one the present with the past.

Their feverish and puny feuds
Stir not my nescience sublime
Nor reached my wandering vastitudes
Capacious as the womb of time.

The more I change the more the same
I heed no Parliamentary storm,
The implications of my name
Do not constrain me to inform.

I grow the more that I am lopped
I am the spur and I the drag
I am the stopper and the stopped
The gagged the gagger and the gag.

More I withhold than I release
Of that which in my deeps I store,
Much I shall hide until the peace
And much keep back for evermore. SAGITTARIUS

THE INFERNAL MACHINE

The audience at The Arts Theatre Club on Friday, September 6th (the second night of Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine*) was thin and papery. But it did not shrink when an air-raid warning in the middle of the scene between the Sphinx and Oedipus lowered the curtain for two minutes; and few though we were, the proportion of us who appreciated the admirable acting of the company was high. Quite apart from the interest of the play with its ominously topical title, it was heartening to see devotion to art triumphing over most disheartening circumstances. The cast could not have played with more zeal and pride had the theatre been crammed, and every actor seemed confident that their subtle work would continue to be enjoyed—Mr. Oliver Messell's gay and fascinating decor and dresses too. I came out into the whispering shuffle of the black streets under that overhanging threat (we all live the life of Damocles) which they had beguiled me into forgetting, vowing that at least that achievement should live in an article one week more. But the contribution of each player can be best conveyed if I first describe M. Jean Cocteau's queer brilliant variations on the theme of *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

The Infernal Machine was, by the way, performed by The Stage Society some years ago, and, if memory serves me, though not with the same wit and finish yet with more unity of effect by toning down the part of Jocasta. Now lack of harmony is the weakness of the play, or (let us put it for the time being this way) the *aim* of the dramatist has been to strike a discord fascinating to a sophisticated ear, by combining the most solemn of themes, man's helplessness against Fate, with modern humour, when it plays round two lovers, one of whom is a boy and the other a spoilt ageing woman clutching desperately on to her departing youth. (See Colette's *Chéri*, for example.) Unsound taste? Very: but M. Cocteau has gifts which enable him to bring off the indefensible: amazing intelligence, a poetic sense of fairy-tale values and—this serves him in lieu of a tragic sense—an exquisite sense of horror. Let us recall the folk-lore material with which he had to deal.

Oedipus was the son of Laius and Jocasta, king and queen of Thebes, and his story was famous in Greek mythology and tragic poetry as typifying the working of Nemesis in human life. According to the legend, an oracle had warned Laius that if he ever had a son, that son should kill his father and marry his mother. So when a boy was born to them the baby was exposed upon the mountain-side in hope that it would die. But a shepherd saved the child and brought it to the King of Corinth who reared it as his own. Now, when Oedipus grew up he too was told by the oracle at Delphi the fate that awaited him; and to avoid it he left the king and queen he believed to be his father and mother and went alone upon his travels. On the road he met an old man with a retinue of servants and Oedipus' servants came to blows with them; and accidentally he himself in taking their part slew the man in the chariot. It was, though he did not know it, the King of Thebes. Shortly afterwards Thebes began to suffer from a dreadful supernatural affliction. A monster with the wings of a bird, the face of a woman and the body and claws of a lion was continually waylaying the youths of the city, asking them a riddle and slaying them when they could not guess it. As with folk-lore tales it was a childishly simple one, and the reward for guessing it was the hand of the Queen (now a widow) and the throne of Thebes itself; for, once the Sphinx was answered, she had to die or disappear. "What is the animal that first goes on four legs, then on two and lastly upon three?" "Man," replied young Oedipus, winning thus a queen and a kingdom. But also, alas for himself and his offspring, fulfilling his accursed fate by committing, unwittingly, the two worst crimes, patricide and incest. Retribution came slowly but in the end. After years of prosperity the gods sent a plague upon Thebes, and suspicion fell upon Oedipus as the law-breaker who had brought this scourge upon the people. The ancient shepherd bore witness that he was the child he had saved and taken to Corinth, and Jocasta learnt who was the man he had slain. There are different endings to the story; in that which Sophocles dramatised, Jocasta hanged herself, and Oedipus, having put out his own eyes to propitiate the gods, left Thebes as a beggar with his daughter Antigone. This then is the material. How does M. Cocteau handle it?

Here is a subject in some respects made to his hand: it possesses a fairy-tale quality which he can handle as a poet and with the lightest touch and it is shot with obscure fears ending in horror. But there is another element pervading it which M. Cocteau's imagination is not grand enough to conceive vividly, an essentially Greek element—the sense of inescapable doom and indelible defilement.

Yet here his admirable intelligence comes to his rescue, reminding him that he must look after that too—and he does keep our eyes on it with considerable ingenuity. If, however, you compare *The Infernal Machine* with *Mourning Becomes Electra*—and it is interesting to do this because the former is an example of the infusion of modern character into ancient Greek tragedy and the latter of Greek tragedy transposed into modern life, you will see at once a difference. Eugene O'Neill's characters were more or less of tragic build—"Vinny" certainly, who was the counterpart of Electra, also her father the General in his stately isolation was not unfitted to fill the part of Agamemnon and the same can be said of the distraught Orestes-Orin. The defect of *The Infernal Machine*, however, is that none of the characters (although they are presented as ancient Greeks which might have made it easier) are adequate to bearing the weight of a tragic theme and transmitting tragic emotion. M. Cocteau has many gifts, but a deep humanity which enables the imagination to conceive characters which are adequate to that is not among them. He can, as his *Parents Terribles* showed, convey a tragedy of weakness but the tragedy of strength for which fate is too strong is beyond him. In short, this play is part fairy-story, a fairy-story with cunningly gruesome touches, part parody, and in the last act, which follows Sophocles closely, a paraphase of Greek drama quite out of keeping with the rest. Let me suggest the discord in this way: the Jocasta whom M. Cocteau has created for us in the previous acts, and Miss Jeanne de Casalis interpreted with a varied vivacity beyond all ordinary praise, and ranging from elderly coquetry to pathetic misgivings, would never have hanged herself on hearing that Œdipus was her son. One can imagine her on the contrary bustling forward with conciliatory agitation and saying caressingly: "My darling, how *can* you believe a word that silly old shepherd says. Look at him! He's completely gaga! How old *are* you my poor man? Eighty-six? I *thought so.* Or is it ninety-six? Ninety-six of course. Œdipus, I have known this old fellow all my life. He has a mania for finding foundlings on the mountains. We ought really to make him head of the Royal Orphanage. You'd like that, wouldn't you, Shepherd—to look after little children instead of little lambs?" And although M. Cocteau has endowed young Œdipus with plenty of the hubris that offends the gods, turning him into even a rather exceptionally uppish "little Hans" who gets the better of all trolls and witches, and marries a princess, he has not suggested even an inkling in him of any conceivable susceptibility to remorse. The youth whom in his conceit, hot-temper, attractive caressingness and charming fundamental helplessness, Mr. Peter Glenville played so well, would never have put out his eyes and tarnished himself to save his people from a sin-avenging plague.

There lies the discord. *The Infernal Machine* is not a good work of art; M. Cocteau's *Orphée* being in keeping from beginning to end and a frank transposition of an ancient fable with delicate amusing original fancies thrown in, is vastly superior to it as a work of dramatic art. Still there is a charming originality about it and the presentation and interpretation were first rate. There are moments, too, of real imaginative power. One which will dwell with me is the scene between an angry impatient Œdipus and the half-blind ancient priest Tiresias, whom Mr. Bromley Davenport impersonated with the dignity of a Chinese sage touched with something saturnine, as though he sympathised with relentless gods. The scene with the Sphinx, too, is imaginative. The Sphinx attracts her victims in the shape of a slightly eerie but attractive girl, and in that form she has a heart which is melted by the handsome young Œdipus, and it is in her human phase that she imparts to him the answer to the riddle she will presently ask him as the Sphinx. She has a dog-faced familiar Anubis with her whom Mr. Vivian Macgrath plays with a sinister stylised elegance. The part of the Sphinx is the most difficult one in the play. It is never easy to act a fay in love, and when the Sphinx assumes her supernatural shape M. Cocteau puts into her mouth a long speech which is the most poetical passage in the whole play. In its queer way it is beautiful, and it is also one exceedingly difficult to deliver, for it requires a silvery-sweet voice yet with an edge to it which should send now and then a shudder down the spine. Part of it describes what we are actually watching: Œdipus lately so contemptuous and patronising towards the finest girl who admired him is now crouched before the Sphinx herself writhing as though every sentence she utters were an invisible snake wound round about him; a constriction which is suddenly released when he gasps out the prompted answer. He instantly recovers his insolent self-assurance, and is departing without a word of gratitude when the Sphinx, whose *mortal* life must now end, calls him back and suggests that he should carry her corpse to Thebes to prove his prowess and his right to the reward. To the supernatural Sphinx, furious at his callous ingratitude, Anubis imparts the nature of the "infernal machine" the gods have constructed to secure his doom. The scene has imaginative beauty. If I say that I can imagine a better Sphinx than Miss Leneen Macgrath's, I am not implying that hers was without merit.

I am glad to commemorate such a performance as this one at the Arts Theatre, even if the praise it deserves cannot send others there. It will dwell in my memory, a bright example of devotion to the actor's art under the most discouraging conditions possible; one more little flag of spiritual defiance waved under the nose of War.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

"ART FOR THE PEOPLE"

THIS exhibition in the Brighton Art Gallery of contemporary paintings and drawings, which closes on October 6th, is one of a series organised by the British Institute of Adult Education. The series goes by the name "Art for the People," and if the people like what they are given there is still hope for civilisation. It is a small collection of about forty oil-paintings and as many drawings, well shown in a large and admirably lighted gallery, and includes no more than half-a-dozen things which are not at least trying to be works of art. The lapses are mostly bits of flashy propaganda by David Low, and the hole they make in the texture of the show illustrates the artistic seriousness of the other exhibitors.

Primarily the exhibition is intended for people who have few opportunities of enjoying contemporary art. They are well provided for. A fair proportion of our national aces is represented: Sickert, Duncan Grant, John, Steer, Frances Hodgkin, Vanessa Bell, Ivon Hitchens, Henry Moore. There is nothing from the Euston Road, which is a pity, and nothing by Matthew Smith, Dobson or Graham Sutherland, which is strange. Interspersed amongst the English are a few Parisian pieces, which serve no particular purpose; but it is always good to see a Rouault, even an unimportant Rouault, and never good to be shown a Chagall. Szyk is a new name to me, but his (or her) drawing adds nothing to the beauty or interest of the exhibition.

For people in the habit of visiting London shows there is a surprise: Patricia Preece. A few—a very few—discerning painters and amateurs have for some years been calling attention to her uncommon talent. Their voices have not carried far, it seems. Here, well seen and in good company, her three pictures make themselves felt, and the power behind them is not to be denied. Patricia Preece is not a winning painter. She feels deeply, and what she feels is gloomy and often grim. To make matters worse, she has seemed hitherto to take no pleasure in paint. But here, in *Cottage Interior*, she appears, possibly under the influence of Sickert, to have allowed herself for once to squeeze the tube freely and let the brush have a turn. The result is, on the whole, encouraging. Nevertheless, the importance of Patricia Preece's art is, and always will be I suspect, that she feels deeply and honestly about life and has power to express a part at any rate of what she feels. Another part, no doubt, will always be in the shop window. She is nearer to the Dutch than to the Italians.

Augustus John is represented by three pictures which represent fairly enough three aspects of his art. The portrait of a boy (No. 3) is a bit of good painting and something more. In the realisation and rendering of the head there is an intensity which proclaims the painter of power. In *Two Gitanas* there is no such sign of strength; but the relation between the figures is established with subtlety and certainty. The painting is nowise remarkable: it is the subtlety with which a relationship is established that takes the eye; and whether this subtlety is the result of plastic sensibility or psychological I do not know, though I should like to. Anyhow, the effect is most happy. But the portrait of Dylan Thomas betrays another side, and the display of free and easy brushwork fails to conceal emptiness.

Three pictures by Sickert suffice to justify my opinion, which is, I believe, the general opinion, that he is the best painter alive in England. And Duncan Grant's contribution suffices to show that, if he is not, that is only because happily we still have Sickert. Neither Ivon Hitchens nor Quentin Bell is quite at his best, which is not to say that *Flowers* by the former or *Still Life* by the latter is unsatisfying. Frances Hodgkin's picture is characteristic, and therefore admirable; and it is characteristic of Christopher Wood's uneven talent that a large *Still Life* should be pretty and a larger *Nude* intolerably feeble. John Piper has sent some of his amusing and attractive drawings of Brighton, and it is to be hoped that the Gallery will acquire at least one of them.

CLIVE BELL

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Freedom and Books," Exhibition at Charing Cross Station

In a small brightly lit alcove of Charing Cross Station (Underground) the traveller can enjoy a 2-to-10-minutes' view of this "exhibition" organised by the National Book Council. In fact, it is little more than a shop window, an advertisement, brilliantly set out. You know the contrasting photographs on opposite pages in *Lilliput?* The same principle has been applied here in a number of open-book tableaux to point the differences between our own freedom of print and Nazi suppression. On one side, full shelves of new English books and reprints, with the announcement "Read what you like here"; on the other, an empty shelf containing a copy of *Mein Kampf*. On the one hand, Voltaire's saying, "I disapprove of your opinions, but I would fight to the death to defend your right to express them"; on the other, a photograph of the cultural bonfires in Berlin, a list of books banned and writers banished. Against the bible, *Mein Kampf* again. A patchwork of book-covers; the same patchwork scrawled over, "Verboten." The visitor, looking on this picture and that, is forcibly struck by the moral and by the gay taste of our book-cover designers. This combination of advertisement and political encouragement could not have been better or more economically done. The National Book Council has set an example that might well be followed by others (including the Ministry of Information) who want to catch the public eye by methods all the more effective for being pleasing.

"In Town Again," at the Criterion

In the charming underground Criterion Herbert Farjeon presents an anthology chosen from his successful intimate reviews, with one or two new items thrown in. Those who missed them before or like to have pleasant memories jogged can here see such admired confections as the Magyar Malady, the Irish Lake Song, Voila les Non-stop Nudes, the Dance Matinée, Cartes Postales and many others which have been much enjoyed before. We are grateful for the absence of any stop-press topicality, and these gentle satires of pre-Blitz modes and manners have almost the charm of being "period." The stars of a starless company are Nadine March with her dry pointed touch, Wilfred Hyde Whyte with his casual vacuity and Joan Sterndale Bennett with her variety of character; and they are well supported by Eric Anderson, John Barron, Sheila Douglas-Pennant and a number more. Their task is not made easier by a low continuous murmur from the stalls: "Yes, you remember! Hermione Baddeley it was, she was awfully good." But they overcome it and even add something of their own to several of the numbers. At the time of writing this is one of the only two shows being produced after dark, the other being the Windmill, which provides a good deal of the ammunition for the satire.

"I Was An Adventuress" at the Odeon

The curfew, and one new film. *I Was an Adventuress* is very pre-war, very Hollywood, and a first-rate time-killer. It will make you forget when you come out whether there is still an air raid on or not; and that is something in these days. As two confidence tricksters operating with jewels on the Côte d'Azur, Stroheim and Peter Lorre make an unexpected hit: only Hollywood could have had the idea of using a director of genius and a specialist in the macabre as a comedy pair. Strohein:, monocled, punctilious, and wise about women, is, of course, the master-mind; flabbily, helplessly, Peter Lorre trails after, with a weakness for small game; after absent-mindedly pilfering a cigarette case or two he explains apologetically, "I am a pathological case." The third member of the party is La Belle Zorina—the lure with which they fasten on their prey. Delicious to see them on the move, like touring actors, with the long days to while away, and a brief scene to be enacted in a hotel lounge or private room, before flitting elsewhere. The temptress, of course, falls for one of her victims (Richard Greene), and tries to escape into marriage and a career in the ballet. For besides possessing a spirited charm, Zorina can dance. We are given a large slice from a performance of *Lac des Cygnes*, in which, unfortunately, the sad enchantment of Tchaikovsky is marred by a decor involving live swans and knights in armour plunging knee-deep in water. Still, ballet is so photogenic that one puts up even with that. Stroheim and Lorre, waiting in the wings, fetch us back from this rather elaborate interlude to comedy; and after various excitements Zorina achieves respectability, and the two tricksters retreat in search of "pastures new." To make it a really good light film, on the level, say, of *Sept Célibataires* or *The Shop Around the Corner*, respectability should have been worsted and the light-fingered past triumphant; but that's another story.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, September 22nd—

C. E. M. Joad: "Principles at Issue," Conway Hall, 11.

Alan Bush: "Soviet Music recorded on Film," Rivoli Cinema, Manchester, 3.

MONDAY, September 23rd—

A.I.A. 1940 Members' Exhibition, Royal Society of British Artists Gallery, Suffolk Street. Till October 10th.

Prof. Denis Saurat: "Will France Find Her Feet Again?" French Institute, 6.45.

TUESDAY, September 24th—

China Campaign Committee Lunch, Lord Strabolgi and Miss Spicer will speak on Campaign for immediate reopening of Burma Road. Ley On's Rest, 91, Wardour Street, 1. Tickets, 2s. 6d.

Miss E. Moberley Bell: "Octavia Hill," The Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, 1.

WEDNESDAY, September 25th—

Fabian Society Lunch, Michael Foot: "British Gestapo," Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, 1. Tickets, 2s. 6d., from 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1.

E. F. M. Durbin: "What Have We to Defend?" Morley College, 7.30. First of six lectures.

Correspondence

OVERSEAS EVACUATION

SIR,—On the question of the evacuation of children overseas as a war emergency measure it is possible to hold many opinions. No statement can apply to all cases, and the emotions implicated are of such a nature and are so strong that no view is likely to be an objective one. The following view seems to me to be as much worth while recording as any other.

It is that the sending overseas of children who have a home in Great Britain is bad as a policy and in many individual cases it is most unfortunate.

There are many children with no homes at all, who could almost certainly derive benefit from any well-planned scheme for their welfare. It is not likely, however, that these will be singled out to be sent abroad in wartime.

A large number of children have homes that are broken, but their parents come together to arrange for their welfare. Such parents feel a justifiable anxiety at the way their personal difficulties disturb their children's home lives, and tend to welcome the idea of evacuation as a solution of their problem. No doubt it often is.

The majority of children, however, have homes, and we have to ask ourselves seriously what it is that these children are to gain from going to the Colonies or to the U.S.A.

Some would argue that emigration is accepted as a fine thing and that it has been the making of many who would not have made good at home. But if children are sent out of England before puberty they do not get the value that an adolescent gets from emigrating. Emigrating is valuable to the adolescent as a test of his or her personal ability to leave home and achieve independence.

It cannot be taken for granted that the children gain anything from being sent out into the world as children, and it has yet to be shown in what respect experience is more rich out of Great Britain than within.

The view is often carelessly expressed that a child's home is probably the worst place for him, and that almost any home other than the child's own is desirable. In the first evacuation scheme even toddlers were included, and only the common sense of a million mothers saved the situation which had in it the elements of a major disaster. Is it not the same people who in 1920 were horrified at the attack they felt Communism in Russia to be making on the home who have spent 1939–1940 not only breaking up the homes of Great Britain? It is Hitler's fault, I admit, but they are also signally failing to foresee the problems of the foster homes or to understand the average mother's distress at giving over responsibility for her children's welfare.

Now there threatens this still more serious and irreversible untying of the family, and the evacuation-mongers can succeed as much as they wish for the reason that there is no limit to the latent guilt feelings of parents. It is indeed surprising how perfectly good fathers and mothers can be persuaded to give over the care of their children when the suggestion is made that they are bad for the children or that their children are in danger at home.

The trouble is that once guilt feelings have been roused, any argument in favour of keeping the children at home feels as if it might be an expression of selfishness, and any argument in favour of sending them away feels as if it might be tainted with the unconscious wish to be rid of them. Objectivity is not attainable, and the tendency therefore is to lean on official policy and to err on the side of Safety First (physical). This leads eventually to regrets, to new guilt feelings and to bitterness.

I personally sympathise deeply with those who are upset when their children do better away from them than at home, and who so unreasonably withdraw them from good billets, for I feel that parents have a right (within certain limits that could be defined by the N.S.P.C.C.) even to manage their children badly. At any rate the value of children to the home cannot be just left out of account.

I give this, my personal view, with a deep sense of responsibility, knowing that there really is a greater physical danger to the child left at home than to the child drafted across one of the oceans. Also I have no wish to minimise the harmful effect of a child's actually seeing dreadful sights or hearing the screams or groans of real suffering. The panic of adults is perhaps the worst thing a child can be called upon to cope with. But adults also can be hurt by war experiences, perhaps more than children in certain circumstances, because they have greater responsibilities.

In regard to the actual state of being at war, I have no evidence that this provides a worse background for a child than a state of so-called peace. If war is cruel, peace can be dishonest, and dishonesty comes as a worse shock to a child than cruelty and death wishes which he understands from the observation of his own instincts. There are two children whose evacuation overseas would seriously have affected morale, and what is true of the Princesses is true to some extent of all children.

The problem can be very clearly stated for those who are able to provide their children with a home of average stability:

(*a*) Contact between parents and children and between the things in the home and the children are valuable in wartime as in peacetime. Many believe such contact to be most valuable in time of acute stress. The younger the child the more certainly is this contact valuable.

(*b*) Military necessity may decide that a child must be sent away from home and parents, and then only is evacuation in any form, and evacuation overseas in particular, advisable. Evacuation is then clearly seen as one of the tragedies of war.

44 Queen Anne Street, D. W. WINNICOTT

BRITAIN AND U.S.S.R.

SIR,—I see no real difference between your views and those expressed by Mr. Pritt except in one respect, and there I hope that you and not he are in the right. You don't believe that the Prime Minister is responsible for the continuance of the anti-Soviet policy of the Foreign Office. Winston Churchill is

saving the life of Britain from its immediate and frightful danger. When his mind is free to devote to the mobilisation of the democratic forces of the world and the promotion of internal revolt in Europe, I do not expect him to be diverted from friendship with Russia by dislike of socialism, or to continue the throttling of the Chinese people by keeping the Burma Road closed. For the moment he may be unable to divert his attention to the utterly disastrous policy of Lord Halifax. But if the war is ever to be ended in victory the only chance is co-operation by all the countries hostile to Fascism. Friendship with Soviet Russia has got to replace the steady hostility of our present Foreign Office, and outspoken friendship with China must take the place of appeasement of Japan.

The right foreign policy is impossible as long as Lord Halifax remains in office. There ought to be a universal demand that the "guilty men" should leave all key positions in the Government. If the demand for Lord Halifax's removal becomes loud enough it will then be easy for the Prime Minister to secure his resignation, when he has time to substitute for him a robust and democratic personality.

Wallington, CHARLES TREVELYAN
Cambo, Morpeth.

SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and Mr. Pritt remain constant to the battle-cry "My Russia, right or wrong."

For the first time I suspect the Russians of a sense of humour. A clamour now arises because of a delay in releasing £4,000,000 of gold belonging to countries which Stalin annexed with as much justification as Hitler annexed Bohemia. But the Russians laughed like hyenas when reminded twenty years ago that they owed us and the French £1,800,000,000. "Dirty" was the epithet applied to that money by good communists and "astute" to that action.

73 Eaton Place, N.W.3. J. M. SINCLAIR

SIR,—Neither you nor Mr. Pritt asks—or answers—the one question which still troubles some of us. Let us agree that the utmost friendship and co-operation between Soviet Russia and Great Britain is a world necessity if any sort of hope for the future is to be realised in our time. Let us further admit that Sir Stafford Cripps may not be finding either Lord Halifax or the Foreign Office uniformly helpful in securing it. Let us even cherish the hope that the spectacle of deep calling unto deep, in the shape of one expelled Labour K.C. addressing an Open Letter to another, may provoke a change of heart in a Government so unregenerate that only such a shock could move them.

Nevertheless we still have to ask—does the Soviet Government want this friendship and co-operation any more than Lord Halifax? We know it took the initiative in suggesting trade negotiations. Unfortunately their initiative does not always coincide with their intentions: they, not once but many times, took the initiative in suggesting collective measures to restrain Nazi aggression.

In fact, we are all for friendship between Britain and Russia? But is Stalin?

Crossways, J. STEWART COOK.
Osborne Road, Windsor, Berks.

JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT

SIR,—Britain needs a new plan for juvenile employment. Youth in industry is a vital section of the war effort; but it is a section which is peculiarly liable to accidents and fatigue if it is not carefully handled. For young people vaunt their powers of endurance and they are not as careful as adults to maintain their full number of hours of rest at the expense of their hours of recreation.

The Factory Acts are not enough. Those firms in the vital war industries which worked 16-18-year-olds seven days a week during the weeks after Dunkirk are still given emergency orders by the Factory Inspectorate to allow the boys to be kept on for 60 hours. This will certainly sap their efficiency, for the boys were not selected according to their ability to stand strain and fatigue; some of them will suffer badly now from the malnutrition of their earlier years due to their parents' and local authorities' poverty; others are capping their overtime by cycling ten miles home.

If you have a large labour force, you can select from it economically. Britain has a large force of juvenile labour, but if it isn't given a lead it is worse than useless. It is immobile. There are great pools of unemployed youth spreading over the South and East of England, and our system for transferring them is hopelessly inadequate. From one stricken East Coast port which lived on its trade with Scandinavia, only 250 workers, including women as well as juveniles, have been transferred to a wool textile town of the West Riding in the last four months. While the juveniles of this town are queueing up at the "Labour," Birmingham's industries have taken on so many juveniles that Smethwick's figure for unemployed is down to eight, and some thousands are employed. The proportion of inefficient hands is certainly greater than one per thousand; it is crazy that the inefficient are employed in Birmingham while in Hull the boys are rotting into the incapability that was one of the worst tragedies of the depressed areas, and while the stronger boys in Birmingham are being worked into a state of fatigue. In the face of these facts, labour pooling is clearly the solution. Sentimental opposition on the ground that it entails the conscription of youth has no place in wartime economies.

Ernest Bevin should invite young persons to join a Labour Youth Force. It should at first be restricted to 50,000. They should be offered two months' training at a nominal allowance. Entrance into the force should be voluntary, but entrants should be discouraged from leaving it. After training the members could be graded according to physique and dexterity and then formed into groups. These groups would be posted to the factories which asked for an emergency order. Employees would then have only to work a steady four or five hours overtime at most. Particular groups could also be delegated for other work. The public schoolboy, for example, is much better suited physically to harvest work and other heavy work than the underfed child of a 48*s.* a week labourer. On the average he is 4ins. taller than an elementary schoolboy of his own age.

Ernest Bevin would need to put in order the houses in which the young people would be lodged. For it is essential that the Force should not be class-ridden but include secondary schoolboys; and these would not be allowed to enter the Force by their parents if the lodging conditions were not improved. Nor will teachers be keen on seeing their boys go into industry. But practical education has a value to which too many have closed their eyes, and this scheme would give the boys something more than education—a sense of security and function. No longer would they change jobs six times in their first year at work. The labour turnover, by the size of which a Society's care for its Youth may be judged, would decline. DOUGLAS SMITH

12 Great Ormond Street,

POSITION OF THE C.O.

SIR,—"Pax" raises a problem that affects not only Local Councils but many democratically controlled concerns, such as Co-Operative Societies.

One can well understand his annoyance at being given leave-of-absence. As a ratepayer of West Bromwich, the Borough which employed him, I quite appreciate his point that when the replacement of employees called up for military service is already an embarrassment, it seems inopportune to dismiss further trained servants because they are C.O.'s. If there were no other considerations to be borne in mind this view of the position would be conclusive.

But there are other considerations, and the most important is the ordinary citizen's idea of what is fair. He quite agrees with the Government's advice to Local Authorities that "no person should be penalised for the mere holding of an opinion"; but he objects to such opinions being of substantial advantage to the holder.

"Pax" suggests that as some Authorities make up the pay of their employees with the Services there is nothing to choose between those who join the Colours and those who are exempt. Just at the moment with land warfare at a standstill and troops at home there may not be much in it; but there is a very considerable difference between sitting in a West Bromwich office and retreating from Dunkirk. It is highly probable that there will be wide differences again before the war is over.

"Pax" exaggerates the importance of himself and his fellow C.O.s to the national war effort. The percentage of C.O.s in each class called up is small and progressively declining among the older groups. As an addition to the man-power necessary to carry on the civilian life of the country, they are almost negligible. Anyhow, exemption from the Services for civilian requirements should be based on an impartial survey of the numbers required, and the technical qualifications of the exempted; not their private opinions.

Whatever their numbers, however, it is absurd not to make the best use possible of C.O.s in the national interest. But it must be done on a basis of fairness all round. For this a change of occupation is almost inevitable as just by the accumulation of knowledge which a man automatically acquires from continuous service, he becomes more valuable than a colleague who has had his service interrupted, possibly for a number of years.

Nor should the C.O. be allowed to leave his alternative work before the Services are demobilised. Otherwise he gets an unfair advantage in the scramble for jobs when peacetime activities are resumed.

I, therefore, suggest that C.O.s should stop complaining about the lenient treatment which they receive, and which they would find in no other country in the world, especially one fighting for its life and liberties. Instead, let them bring pressure to bear on the Government to give effect to the following points:—

1. That it is the obligation of the Ministry of Labour to find them useful employment.
2. That official regulations should be laid down that the exempted should not be better off than the enlisted man.

If this were done a great deal of the growing hostility to C.O.s would be removed and they themselves would feel more at ease in their minds when comparing their lot with their more orthodox brothers. RATEPAYER

Moore Street, West Bromwich.

WHITEHALL

SIR,—A friend who is temporarily occupying an important position in a Government office writes to us *à propos* the muddle and inefficiency of such offices in general: "If we stave off invasion it will be because God is an Englishman and not thanks to the Black Hell of Whitehall."

As an example of what is going on may we quote a current experience of our own which we have every reason to know is quite typical of the Government department concerned. Our business is almost entirely export now and, on August 21st last in response to an order from the United States, we sent off by registered parcel post a book valued at £15. We, like everyone else outside official quarters, were quite unaware that a new Export of Goods (Control) (No. 31) Order had been promulgated that morning which required that for the export of books more than 75 years old a licence must be procured from the Board of Trade. When we saw in our newspaper the next morning that such was the case we imagined that all books already on the way at the time of issuing the order would be allowed to proceed. On August 29th, however, we received from the Customs Office a form to say that our parcel had been detained for want of this licence.

We applied the same day to the indicated office for licence and, on September 5th, we received a printed card informing us that our letter was receiving attention. On September 7th we received an application form for a licence, a copy of which we enclose for your edification. You will observe that the printed form which is attached to the duplicated form of application is actually a blank form of licence (of which we must send also two carbon copies), but observe that the second paragraph in the right-hand margin reads: This licence is not applicable for exports by Parcel Post. . . . This page should, nevertheless, be completed in respect of applications for parcel post licences. Only a Government department could have thought out a condition of that description.

We completed both these forms on September 7th and returned them at once and to-day, September 12th, we receive another printed card acknowledging receipt of this application, but no indication whatsoever when, if at all, our licence is to be issued. Furthermore, this card introduces a new complication for, whereas hitherto our reference number had been ELD. 6022/40 it has now, apparently, been changed to 18A/1959/40. We have quite a collection of these hieroglyphic reference numbers from various Government departments and our last experience of a change of this kind was with the Petrol Controller and resulted in the loss of half our papers, a delay of five weeks in the issue of petrol rations and the loss of our registration book. Naturally we are nervous about this change on the part of the Board of Trade and apprehensive whether it may not presage some similar disaster.

The main point, however, is that it is now more

than two weeks since we first applied for permission to carry out a perfectly normal and legitimate transaction to one of our regular customers. We may add that we have already, with some difficulty, convinced him that the Treasury will not allow him to pay for books out of a balance which he has maintained at a London bank for many years and which he has constantly supplied from America—a balance which he retained for the convenience of English booksellers who have always preferred cheques on London rather than wait for New York clearance. This customer, unlike others of whom we have experience, continues to buy in England and to pay in dollars although he has several hundred pounds in a London bank which is frozen indefinitely.

Now, sir, if the Government wishes to foster export trade, not to mention good feeling in America, it is certainly going entirely the wrong way to work to achieve its object. The fact is, of course, that the Civil Service mind has no conception of ordinary business methods. It never replies to letters by return of post (in itself necessarily a rather long-winded business just now) and when it does reply it is with one of these infuriating printed acknowledgments which, while they state that one's communication is receiving attention, mean, in actual fact that it is being pigeon-holed for a day or so just to teach the correspondent that Government offices cannot be treated like private concerns. As if one needed any convincing of that. The proof of this pigeon-holing business is clear. It is just as simple, in answer to an application for a licence to send the necessary form right away instead of this stupid and unnecessary acknowledgment. Yet the acknowledgment of our first letter is dated September 2nd, and the despatch of the printed forms September 5th. Why should it take three days to put a couple of blanks in an envelope and send it off?

Private firms are, of course, moved to observe a measure of punctuality and swiftness by the knowledge that they have rivals in business. The Government official knows very well that one cannot patronise the firm next door if his department behaves in an unbusinesslike or unsatisfactory manner. But the staff of the Board of Trade and the Treasury—the two departments concerned with export trade—must be made to realise that the Government is in business itself now: that it is not sufficient to exhort exporters to "Go To It" or to "Keep At It," or whatever the latest slogan may be. We expect from Government departments a little less precept and a little more example—a little less aptitude for turning neat phrases and a little more evidence that their meaning is grasped in high places. Let there be less need for grimness on the part of the private citizen and less of the carefree gaiety of officials. We do not need broadcast exhortations telling us that as exporters we are in the very front line of battle. What would cut more ice with us would be a little less enfilading from our own trenches (dug-outs might be a more applicable term for some Government departments). We do not need to be taught our own business. If we do not strain every nerve to keep up our export turnover we shall expire, for more than 90 per cent. of the trade in rare books is export now. All that we ask is that if these restrictions and licences are necessary, and we are not at all convinced that they are, then at least the working of the scheme should be made as smooth and speedy as possible instead of, as it is at present, made as difficult and as long-winded as the worst precedents of officialdom can make it.

Taylor's Elkin Mathews, Ltd.,
Takeley, pp. PERCY H. MUIR
Nr. Bishop's Stortford.

HUYTON

SIR,—My husband is an Austrian journalist, in Huyton. From time to time I send him parcels of literature, or magazines. The copies of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION have apparently never got there. My last parcel consisted of three Penguins: Ronald Storrs on Lawrence of Arabia; Mowrer on China; a book on Nazi methods of penetration. My husband writes this morning to say these books are considered unsuitable for internees and have been confiscated. HONOR TRACY
Shotley. (Mrs. Rudolf Liebmann).

SIR,—I would like to thank you for the excellent way in which you have pleaded for the cause of the Refugees. At the same time we ought to take great care least the pleasure we feel in seeing such efforts rewarded by improvements in conditions, should lead us to persuade ourselves that the victory is greater than it really is.

Last week we received in Newcastle a letter from Huyton saying that each house in the camp was now allowed one chair, and the Refugees enjoyed the almost forgotten luxury of sitting in a chair for one hour each per day.

This is certainly an improvement, but hardly one which would justify Critic's amiable remark that "Huyton is now . . . as comfortable as one can expect a camp to be." J. FAIRBAIRN,
Refugee Centre, Assistant Secretary.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

P.S.—The secretary should have written this but he is in Huyton, sitting (if it's his turn), on the one chair!

THE SWASTIKA

SIR,—There is no mystery about the significance of the swastika in modern India. It is merely a symbol for good fortune, and it is most commonly seen on the fly-leaf of a trader's ledger or on the lintel of his house. Also it is the chief lucky mark used by the Jains (a sect as remote from the associations of Hitlerism as could be imagined), for it was the Cognizance of Suparsvanatha the seventh hierarch.

Its meaning in ancient India is not beyond doubt, but most probably it denoted the course of the sun and thus the proper method of circumambulating a shrine, keeping the right hand turned toward the sacred building (E. Thomas, *Indian Antiquary, IX*, pp. 65 and 135). RICHARD BURN
9 Staverton Road,
Oxford.

SIR,—Mr. Hitler's choice of the Swastika as emblematic of his movement seems to have been due to his erroneous belief that there was something Aryan about it. Whether this very widespread symbol ever meant very much nobody seems to know. Its modern (pre-Hitler) use is by no means Aryan. It is to be seen on many a wayside shrine throughout Japan as the sign of Jizo (to which the Japanese have reduced the Indian name of the Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha), that benevolent deity of the underworld who takes the souls of children under his care. During the past twenty years or so the name of a Chinese body called the Red Swastika Society has cropped up from time to time, now in Formosa, now in Mongolia; it does not seem to be of much significance, but its doings are suspect in Japan. The better kind of Japanese must regret that a symbol so entirely blameless in their own country should be appropriated by Germany and put to such base uses. A. MORGAN YOUNG
Oxford.

SIR,—When Hitler adopted the Swastika, Mr. Kipling asked us to omit it from any reprints of his books. DANIEL MACMILLAN
Macmillan and Co., Ltd.,
St. Martin's Street,
London, W.C.2.

BRITISH BOOKS IN THE U.S.A.

SIR,—In one of his admirable and invaluable radio talks to the United States, Mr. J. B. Priestley sponsored the cause of English writers and urged people here to buy and read English books. As a result, the British Books Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Mayer, with a view to achieving this aim. The Committee hopes not merely to help in a practical way writers and publishers, but also to contribute towards strengthening the ties between the two countries. We are now in communication with the British Publishers Association, but feel that many of your readers also will be interested in this project.

The British Library J. B. ORRICK,
of Information, Secretary, British Books
50 Rockefeller Plaza, Committee
New York.

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War by Revolution

ROUTLEDGE

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

CHARLES WATERTON'S *Wanderings in South America* is one of the classics of nineteenth-century travel. His life illustrates a notorious anomaly in the English character wherein we relieve the tedium of being a nation of shop-keepers by being also a nation of lunatics. Having put the stamp of caste and convention upon every act, thought and feeling, so that there is no situation in which we cannot freeze, for safety's sake, into the condition of public statues, we rebel against self-persecution and suddenly do exactly what we like. And we do it with the childlike vehemence, the light-headedness and insouciance which arrested development has kept fresh inside us. Among the English aristocrats this trait has been extravagantly staged. But it is not always extravagant. Occasionally, as in the person of Waterton, we produce an eccentric who suggests a strange crossing of the imp and the saint.

A new and entertaining life of Waterton, *The Squire of Walton Hall* (Cassell, 15*s*.), has just been written by Philip Gosse, a book which, owing to the scarcity of other material, draws considerably on Waterton's writings. This is a rather rudimentary method of biography and Mr. Gosse is also inclined to be arch. But there are long silences in Waterton's life; it is better to copy than to guess, and the amateur rambling manner of Waterton's own style, with its comical classical references, is made to encourage some playfulness in a biographer. The young man who lay in his South American hammock with his naked foot hanging out in an attempt to get it bitten by a vampire bat, and who was annoyed because the vampires turned him down and went for the foot of his neighbour, a clergyman, instead; the old man of 80 who used to crouch behind the coats at Walton Hall and, imitating a dog, spring out upon his guests and seize their ankles in his mouth, invites an occasional pat from his biographer.

Neither the saint nor the imp appears in the National Gallery's portrait of Waterton. A young, eupeptic squire, the head held well up by the cravat, the lips well-shaped, the nose firm—all suggest the personable figure of the ballroom. There is faint amusement in the eyes, some elegance in the lift of the brows and a kink of thoughtfulness between them. Is that the crimson glow of a glass of wine in the closed hand? One pauses and looks again at the darkened painting. Wine in the hand of Charles Waterton, who swore an oath to the fathers of Stonyhurst that he would never drink fermented liquors, and who believed this abstinence saved his life in the plague of Malaga, and in the malarial flats of Demarara! Good heavens, no! That ball of red in the naturalist's hand is the head of a crimson perroquet. And beside the bird is the head of a stuffed cat.

It is the cat which gives the game away, which gives a disturbing air of hoax to the steady gaze of the dancing partner. What breed of cat is this that looks so owlish, whose pupils are raised with such a solemn expression of episcopal comedy and irreverence? She is no Yorkshire tabby. Fierce, sinister, quizzical and independent, the head appears to have a world of satire in its up-curving mouth, and a reminiscence so unholy that, if uttered, the human race, or at least the Protestant succession—Waterton's special bugbear—would hardly recover from it.

No ordinary cat and no ordinary squire. Years later when the *Wanderings* had been published and Waterton's barefoot trudges through Guiana had been succeeded by milder jaunts to Rome, with "the girls" (his elderly sisters), the visitor to the museum and bird sanctuary at Walton Hall would have surprises. It was disconcerting, as you walked through the bird-filled demesne, where the weasel and the carrion crow lay down with the linnet and the dove, to hear from the tree tops a human cry; and to see swinging on the upper branch of an enormous elm the 83-year-old Squire himself. Bird's nesting, he explained, as he came down with terrifying agility. Or perhaps he was just reading Horace and getting fresh classical lard for his conversation. Outlandish in top hat, blue coat and check waistcoat, shabby and with his shoes loose, he reached the ground and to show there was nothing eccentric in his behaviour—for how he hated that middle-class accusation of eccentricity!—he would point out that it was useful to wear your shoes loose. So! Up went his leg and off flew his shoe forty or fifty yards away across the lawn, like a stone from an arquebus. An old Spanish-American habit.

Now you were at your ease. The Squire's house was on an island, a bare Georgian mansion sticking up like an orphanage in the middle of a lake, and he led you to a boat—Charon's ferry, of course—and rowed you across. With many explanations. There were the rats, the brown Hanover rats. They infested country mansions. And he, being Charles Waterton, that very original man who had made a stir by discovering one could cure a sprained ankle by holding it under Niagara Falls, by his experiments in curing hydrophobia by the use of paralysing Indian poisons, and who had upset doctors by constantly bleeding himself and serious travellers by riding on the back of a crocodile—well, he had solved the rat problem. He had introduced them to a tiger cat from the Guianas. Untamable? You were mistaken. It was the simplest thing on earth to tame a tiger cat.

Not, he digressed—and before you were over the moat you realised that digression was inevitable in the author of the *Wanderings*—not that the cat was his favourite animal. The tree sloth was far more attractive. A little difficult in the house because of the slippery floors, the tree sloth was perfectly happy if, using your common sense, you hung him on to the back of your chair. He would hang there for hours. Sydney Smith (the Squire would recall with the happy vanity of a praised author) had made a point of the sloth's faculty for hanging in that long and excellent review of the *Wanderings*: "The sloth moves suspended," wrote the wit, "he rests suspended, sleeps suspended and passes his life suspended—like a young clergyman distantly related to a bishop."

But at this the Squire's expression became a little tart. The quotation had reminded him of the corruption of the Protestant faith.

From this to taxidermy was a natural digression to the Squire. There was only one Church, he would point out, and only one method of skinning and stuffing animals. It appeared to Waterton that two urgent questions lay before the world. How to save your unfortunate Protestant soul and how to make people stuff birds and animals properly. In both cases the Waterton method alone was satisfactory. The Roman Church did the one, Waterton's corrosive sublimate did the other. The Church preserved the soul, corrosive sublimate the skin. And it went further. On coats and trousers a wash of the chemical in the Waterton manner worked miracles. It was superb on top hats.

You had crossed the moat. You were in the house. You saw at last what you had come to see. There in its profusion, gaudy, fantastic, exhaustive, stood the famous collection. The toucans, the perroquets, the flamingoes, the humming birds, the snakes, the vampire bats, the apes, the fish, the rodents of the tropics, flamed and grimaced before you; all obtained by Mr. Waterton in his travels, *prepared and stuffed* by himself by the only true and infallible method. What a contribution to science, you murmured. And then, you presently noticed, something was lacking. Could Mr. Waterton, the famous naturalist, have made an omission? Where, you asked, politely, were the *hen* birds? At this Mr. Waterton shouted. That was what came of science, this damned "closet science" which, thank heaven, the Jesuits had never taught him. Hens! He never collected them. They were so dull to look at.

That was where the world had gone wrong—first the Reformation and then science. One had only to look at his own family and estate. As old as any family in Yorkshire, the Watertons had been robbed, fined, excluded from public life and office for centuries because of their religion. He resented it. But little could be done. One could let weasels breed to annoy one's neighbours. One could, as a taxidermist, have one's little joke. And with this, like an early Tussaud, like some Indian fetichist, he led you to his Chamber of Horrors. People had complained that the ape he had brought home stuffed from Demerara labelled "unknown species" was just a little too—well, a neighbouring squire had remarked: "Dear me! What an extraordinary looking man Mr. Waterton must be!" "All right," the old gentleman would say, "If you suspect the ape, what about these?"

You looked. You blinked. You looked at Mr. Waterton. You remembered the wily octogenarian rocking on his tree top, playing boomerang with his shoe, pasting his hats, you recalled his habit of sleeping on the floor with his head on a tree trunk, and the talk there was when once a year he invited the lunatics from a neighbouring asylum to the grounds and rowed them round the lake. Could it be that Mr. Waterton was odd? Here was John Knox, for example, but in the skin of a frog. Here was Titus Oates, an obscene toad. That rather nasty lizard was Queen Elizabeth, and not a bad likeness either. This monkey encased in the shell of a tortoise was "Mr. Bull in Trouble." And here, like something out of Blake or even out of Goya, was "Noctifer. The Spirit of the Dark Ages," the breast and legs of a bittern neatly joined up with the head and wings of an eagle owl and preserved for ever in corrosive sublimate. Science to the scientist; surrealism to the surrealists; Protestants to hell; a Catholic gentleman, with a classical education, was going his own gait and, retiring after a life of innocent adventure, was getting his own back.

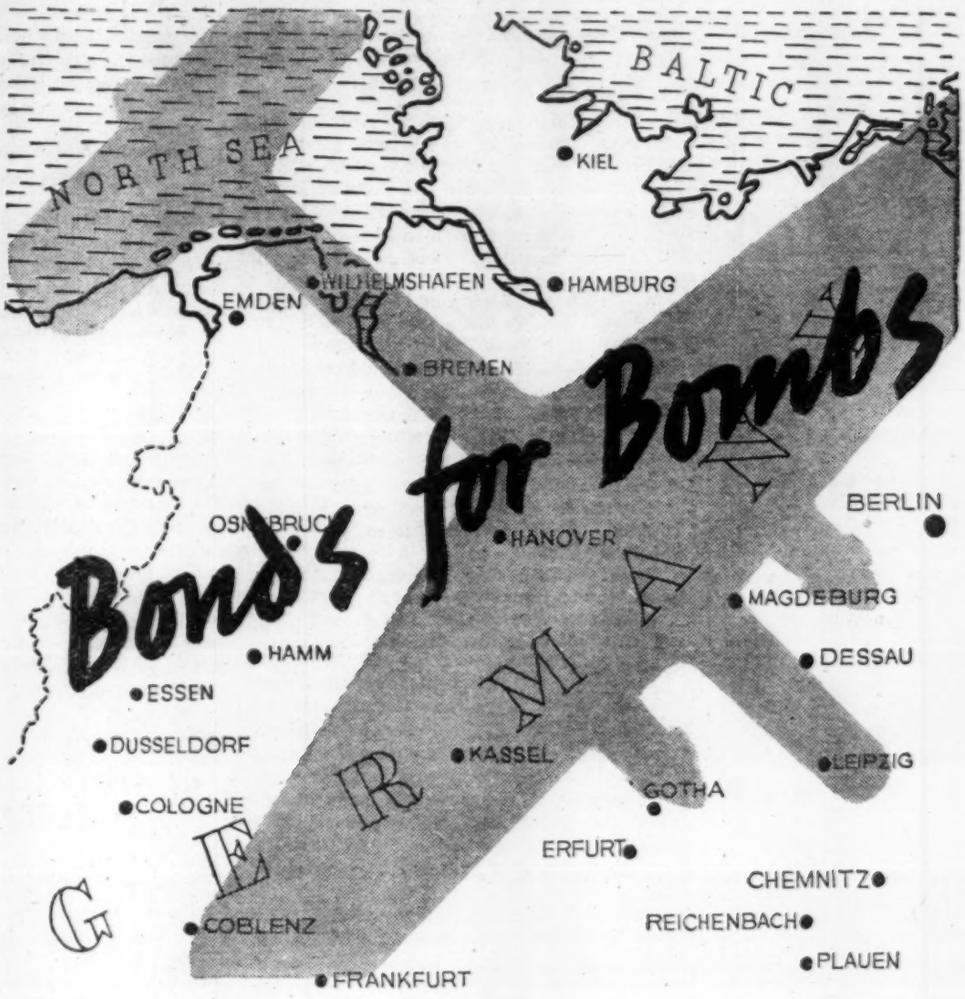
The charm of Waterton's *Wanderings* springs from the freshness of his curiosity and his continual good spirits, his spacious way with a story. His urbanity is innocent and amateur. His stunts, like the ride on the alligator or climbing the dome, cross and lightning conductor in St. Peter's and putting his glove on top, were purely boyish. Rigid in his religion he is not prim—the incident of the marching ants, for example, is a smoke-room tale raised to the point of classical decorum. He has the courage of those who believe in being continuously active, in thinking of something else to enquire about or to do. He is beautifully credulous. And, as his house was on an island, so he too lived like all the eccentrics, on the island of himself.

V. S. PRITCHETT

GRAVES SUPÉRIEUR

No More Ghosts, Selected Poems. By ROBERT GRAVES. *Faber*. 2*s*. 6*d*.

It is excellent that this selection should have been made of Robert Graves's always remarkable, often beautiful, often arid, cantankerous, difficult and forbidding, poems. His sturdy craftsmanship, the concentration of his thought, make Graves's poems extremely individual, and it is perhaps their uncompromising qualities which make them all too neglected. In an early poem, *Rocky Acres*, Graves gives us a



> In Germany the targets included the docks at Kiel and Wilhelmshafen, the transformer station at Kelsterback, near Frankfurt, the Messerschmitt factory at Augsburg, oil tanks and supply depots at Mannheim, and secret aerodromes...In Italy the Fiat works at Turin and the Marelli Magneto factory at Sesto San Giovanni were again attacked...In enemy-occupied France oil tanks in the Gironde Estuary near Bordeaux, at Pauillac, near Brest and at Cherbourg were bombed.
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ROUTLEDGE KEGAN PAUL

picture which remarkably resembles the effect of his own poems :

This is a wild land, country of my choice,
With harsh craggy mountain, moor ample and bare.
Seldom in these acres is heard any voice
But voice of cold water that runs here and there
Through rocks and lank heather growing without care.

The reader of his *Collected Poems* may well quail before this craggy landscape, but having acclimatised himself by this Sesame Book, he will certainly acquire a taste for Graves's poetry which is distinct and pure and peculiar like a wine, more acrid than what Yeats called "Graves Supérieur." Graves himself insists on quality and texture, regarding poets as objects, in fact as fish or apples :

Any honest housewife would sort them out,
Having a nose for fish, an eye for apples.

Because they have such distinctive and tangible qualities, these poems should positively be read—the reviewer's first task is to say "Read this book," or "Don't read it."

As a poet, Graves is so much himself that it is not much use comparing him with other contemporary poets. Nevertheless some of his contemporaries owe much to him : Norman Cameron, obviously, and Auden, who has cribbed a bit from

Whose griefs are melancholy
Whose flowers are oafish,
Whose waters, silly,
Whose birds, raffish,
Whose fish, fish.

Fundamentally Graves is more genuinely and truthfully an individual than are many of his contemporaries, less of the literary man, though excessive prose-writing has probably not helped the flow of his metres. However he is somewhat warped and weather-beaten and a vein of spitefulness runs through much of his work, especially when he touches on that holy subject which poets are well advised, surely, to avoid—"the poet."

The reader of Graves's poems can hardly fail to be struck by the contrast between the almost childish simplicity of the early poems and the cerebration of the later ones. In his first poems, Graves is attracted by childish and folk forms—the ballad, the nursery rhyme, rugged Skeltonics. In his later work, the thought and imagery are often as complicated as that of "metaphysical" poetry, and they have a relentless willed quality, as though Mr. Graves was determined not to let himself or the reader off lightly. There is a lack of accidents, of spontaneity, of improvisation. Many of these poems seem to have a prose meaning behind them which has deliberately been translated into poetry. They are not inevitable. They are nearly always about subjects which might be expressed in other ways but which happen to have been put into poetry. After reading a poem by Graves one feels inclined to ask "What is it about?" and then to restate it to oneself in prose. Some of the poems here, such as *The Laureate*, and *The Devil's Advice to Story-tellers*, might equally be written as notes in *But It Still Goes On*, notes on Poet Laureates and advice to prospective novelists written down when Graves was himself writing a novel. But this criticism would equally apply to much German poetry and to some poems of Donne and other metaphysical writers. The fact is that the contemporary dogma that a poem can only say something which it says in that particular way is an over-statement. There is also a poetry of Sprich-Worte, proverbs and morals, which is really a terse way of expressing prose sentiments.

One poem, "In Procession," consists of a procession of thoughts which occur to Mr. Graves when he is half asleep. The opening is promising, but then he expresses his own disappointment on awakening to find that he cannot get back to the state of semi-consciousness :

Oh, then, when I wake,
Could I courage take
To renew my speech,
Could I stretch and reach
The flowers and the ripe fruit . . .
Could I rip a silken shred
From the banner tossed ahead . . . etc.

The prosaic literary quality of these images illustrates the most frequent cause of weakness in his poems—the failure to get beneath that which is willed and thought out to that which is spontaneous and unexpected and living and involuntary. This awareness undoubtedly exists in the earlier poems, but it is repressed later on, as though Graves was not quite satisfied in finding himself too simple a person.

Nevertheless, perhaps the creaking of the machine is worth it, because when his later poems do come off they have a distinction of diction which is beautiful and memorable :

Be assured, the Dragon is not dead
But once more from the pools of peace
Shall rear his fabulous green head.

And

Children are dumb to say how hot the day is,
How hot the scent is of the summer rose,
How dreadful the black wastes of evening sky,
How dreadful the tall soldiers drumming by.

The two poems which open with these lines have an impersonality, an exactness of statement, a finality, which makes them as exciting as the best of Eliot, or Auden, or later Yeats. I have read them many times during the past ten years, and do not tire of them. It is a pity that there is something in Mr. Graves's powerful will and intellect which obstructs him from writing always with such a naturalness and freedom.

STEPHEN SPENDER

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The Rebuilding of London After the Great Fire. By J. F. REDDAWAY. *Cape.* 18*s.*

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In one respect, the City of London was uncommonly fortunate. Charles II may have had few political virtues ; but he had imagination and a real sense of civic responsibility. The measures he advocated, both for checking the conflagration and for relieving the confusion and distress by which it was followed, were intelligent, far-sighted and extremely courageous. To a taste for architecture he added an interest in town-planning. Had Charles occupied the position of an absolute monarch (which otherwise it is exceedingly fortunate that he did not hold) he might have rebuilt London as a phoenix among contemporary cities. In fact, he was obliged to leave the work of reconstruction to the burghers themselves ; and, although they set about it with great energy and determination, they were hampered inevitably by the restric-

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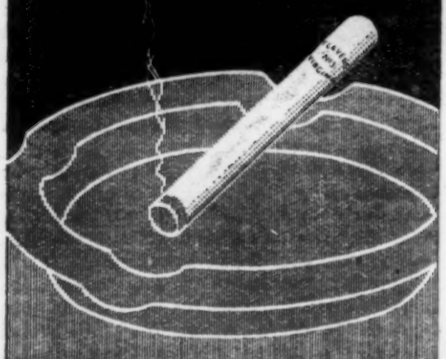

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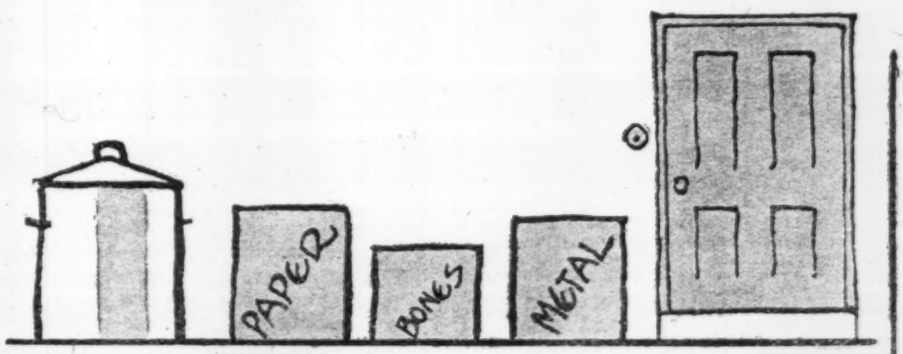

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HARRAP

tions of private ownership. Nevertheless (as was done in *Antic Hay*) it is possible to overdramatise the situation. It is not true, for example, that Wren's heaven-inspired project was "approv'd of by . . . Parliament" but ultimately rejected because of "the obstinate Averseness of a great Part of the Citizens to alter their old Properties . . ." and their "Unwillingness to give up their Properties, tho' for a Time only, into the Hands of publick Trustees. . . ." Wren's scheme (explains Mr. Reddaway) like others was considered and "like others it was rejected. The City's own surveyor submitted a scheme." But, together with Wren's, it was passed over: "the difficulties were too great." It *is* true, on the other hand, that had vested interests been a trifle less obstructive, the City might have been rebuilt on more sweeping lines. Mr. Reddaway does not write of a failure, so much as of a typically English compromise. The topography of the old city was preserved: but tremendous improvements were effected in detail. Rules were laid down as to the height and materials of the new houses: all manner of salutary by-laws were enforced. The seventeenth century was an age of practical men; and, though one may deplore the loss of a splendid opportunity, one cannot but respect the thoroughness with which these Restoration Londoners set to work making the best of a bad job. Mr. Reddaway's monograph may be a little ponderous for the general reader: but it will be of immense value to students of London's history and to those who concern themselves with the subject of civic planning. It is soberly but soundly composed, and plentifully illustrated. PETER QUENNELL

HISTORY BOOKS

Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth. By ROBERT GRAVES. *Methuen.* 8s. 6d.
The Luck of the Maclean. By CONSTANCE W. DODGE. *Robert Hale.* 9s. 6d.
The Earthly Paradise. By C. S. FORESTER. *Michael Joseph.* 8s.
The Wake of the Conquered. By MAURICE BETHELL JONES. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

When one has to review four historical novels, only one of which can be taken with full seriousness *as a book*, it is difficult not to start wondering what is wrong with the whole of this class of literature, and why it is that nearly every historical novel, whatever the author's intentions may have been, has the air of a pastiche or literary exercise, rather like the plagiarised adventure-stories that are written by clever children.

One reason, undoubtedly, is the difficulty of believing that our ancestors were human beings like ourselves. To judge from a well-known passage in Chaucer, this difficulty is not confined to our own age. We have a habit of using archaic language on solemn occasions, and therefore it is hard to realise that a remark like "Hold thy peace, thou scurvy knave" once seemed as natural and colloquial as "Shut your trap, you bloody bastard." In writers like Harrison Ainsworth the pish-tush lingo escaped from the dialogue into the *récit*, and whole books were written to the tune of "I'faith! quoth the sturdy varlet," or "With a dastard blow he clove him to the chine." The other thing that is hard to believe about our ancestors is that they ever had their peaceful moments. The present age is eventful if ever one was, more explosives have been dropped on London in the last two weeks than were used in the whole of the Hundred Years' War, and yet the belief lingers that the past was more exciting than the present. It is a belief that affects very nearly all historical novels, even the best. Every character in an historical novel is in constant action, always plotting, fighting, flying for his life, hiding behind the arras, devastating provinces, going on pilgrimages or ravishing the swineherd's daughter. No one ever seems to have a good home or a steady job.

And this blood-and-thunder tradition persists under surface changes. All the authors of the last three novels on my list make strenuous efforts—too strenuous, in the case of Mr. Jones—to be simple and natural and write about credible people, but somehow the plots thicken and the blood flows as briskly as ever. After Ford Madox Ford's *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, a seemingly new fashion in historical novels set in, it was recognised that life in the past had its lighter side, and in accuracy of detail there has unquestionably been a great advance. In the worst Victorian specimens there was no sense of period at all. A good example is Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*, which is a sort of counterblast to the Victorian Gothic, an American diatribe against the Bad Old Days, but actually very similar to the thing it is attacking. From it one gets the impression that the whole of the Middle Ages, from Charlemagne to the fall of Byzantium, is happening simultaneously. Dante is writing the *Inferno* and Alfred is burning the cakes. In the castle hall the baron, just home from the Crusades, is warming his feet in the entrails of a couple of serfs. Down in the cellar the Grand Inquisitor is tearing out an Albigensian's finger-nails. Up in the attic Low i' the Brow, the Court poet, is knocking off a ballade. Here at least the authors of these three novels do not err. All are extremely knowledgeable about their period, understand feudal tenure and the rigging of a galleon, can give hints about the use of herbs in sorcery. But all of them fail to do what almost any novelist can do when he is writing about his own time: that is, to produce a story about normal people in whose inner lives it is possible to be interested.

The Earthly Paradise, though written without distinction, is perhaps the best of the three. It is a story about the last voyage of Columbus, and the disgusting massacres perpetrated by the Spaniards, who saw in the Central American Indians absolutely nothing except a race of heathen who possessed gold and were easily robbed of it. Seen through the eyes of a Catalan merchant (representative of the new bourgeoisie, and more humane than the Castilian adventurers that he is among) the story is even a little moving towards the end, not in its own right, perhaps, but because of the rage one always feels when one thinks of the wiping-out of the ancient American civilisations. *The Luck of the Maclean* is quite a good story if you can bear the subject, which I admit I cannot. Although it ends with adventures in America, most of it is about the 1745 rebellion. I confess quite freely to a prejudice against books about Scotland and particularly about the Highland, Celtic, romantic side of Scottish life; though, to avoid giving a false impression, I should like to say that Miss Dodge does not refer to Charles Edward as Bonny Prince Charlie.

The Wake of the Conquered is technically more interesting than the others, because, as I have hinted above, Mr. Jones has made heroic but finally unsuccessful efforts to get away from the besetting faults of the historical novel. It is a story of the Norman Conquest, ending with the Battle of Hastings (1066, lest there should have been another Battle of Hastings before this is printed), and the welter of double-crossing that led up to it. In his efforts to give verisimilitude and prove to himself and others that the Ancient Saxons *were* human beings after all, Mr. Jones has inserted little scraps of ultra-modern dialogue and "psychological analysis" in among the murders, battles and adulteries that made up life in those days:

> It was a typically woman's revenge: one of those direct reversals, a simple primitive see-saw, black replacing white, which delight the unsubtle feminine mind. . . . Still young and charming,

he thought dreamily; scarcely changed from the girl I loved in those East Anglian meadows, when we strolled through little beating daisies and got all yellowed from buttercups. . . . It's a little too modern for my taste—too Norman, like everything of Edward's. There's something cold and inhuman about all this stone.

Somehow it does not convince. One is left with the feeling that an illiterate Saxon king, a great beer-drinker and handy with a battle-axe, did not really think and talk like that. Our ancestors remain a psychological puzzle. We are not sufficiently in sympathy with them to portray them in novels. They are incredible when they slap the hilts of their poniards with a ringing laugh, and incredible when they have the emotions of a modern university graduate tacked on to them. Still, Mr. Jones has perceived the nature of the problem. He might gain something from a technical study of *Salammbo*, one of the very few books in which it has ever been successfully solved.

Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth is a different matter, but then it is not really a novel but a very large footnote to an autobiography. So far as his prose work goes, Mr. Graves is very much a man of one book, *Good-bye to All That*. It was not only an outstanding war-book but a very remarkable piece of social history, the sort of book that can only appear through some kind of accident. It gave a picture of the old pre-1914 mercenary army—now changing, though by no means out of recognition—that could only have been given by a man able to stand simultaneously inside and outside the system. Unfortunately, the events of 1914–18 made so deep an impression on Mr. Graves that he has never quite escaped from the period. His present book is really a return to it. Sergeant Lamb, whose real adventures are here written up in what is more or less novel form, served first in the Ninth but later in the Twenty-third, afterwards to become the Welch Fusiliers, Mr. Graves's old regiment. He fought in the Canadian campaign of the American War of Independence, travelled much among the Indians, and was made prisoner by the Americans. Mr. Graves is therefore writing regimental history rather than fiction, and he gives a great deal of extremely interesting information about the life of a private soldier in the mid-eighteenth century. Apart from the floggings, it does not seem to have been so bad as one would imagine. Sixpence a day, at that time, must have been a much better wage than two-and-sixpence is now. And needless to say, Mr. Graves knows all there is to be known about wampum, beavers, berdaches, birch-bark canoes and the exact method of taking a scalp, and can write eighteenth-century prose without slipping into parody. But the book is really a pendant to *Good-bye to All That*, an act of devotion towards the regiment with which he still feels a tie, but which, I dare say, is not particularly proud of having once had a poet in its officers' mess.

GEORGE ORWELL

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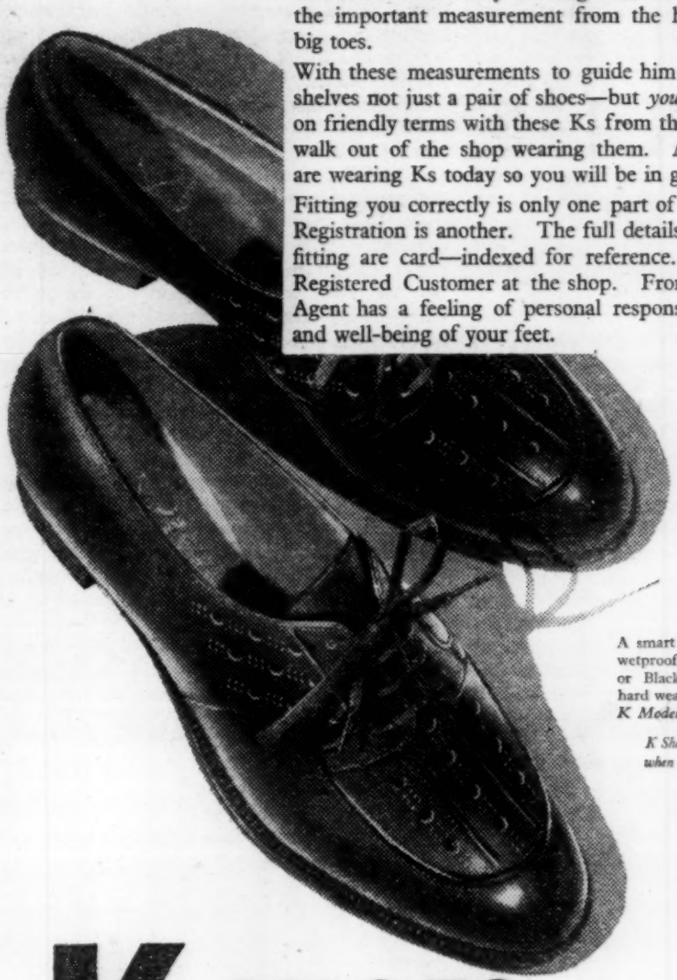

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which remains deeply national and which is less openly divided by class war than the other countries he has undermined before attacking them. His deceptions have lost their power to deceive, and it has been easy for the editor of the Macmillan War Pamphlets to find distinguished writers of rival schools of thought to explain why in spite of their fundamental differences of outlook and philosophy they are all sure that it is necessary to defeat Hitler.

E. M. Forster speaks as a man of letters, the artist who knows that the things he values must disappear, and perhaps for centuries, if the Nazi system triumphs. Father Knox explains how Hitler tricked the Catholic Church in Germany, finally attempting to substitute a pagan philosophy which is as racially exclusive as Christianity is nominally universal, and which is completely amoral in its search for power. The Dean of Chichester gives a most valuable account of the struggle of the Protestant Church which has put up a continuous fight against totalitarianism. In *War With Honour* A. A. Milne explains why the pacifism which he preached in 1934 has led him rationally enough to support the present war. Mr. Milne, of course, never was a pacifist in the strict sense; he was merely a man sane enough to hate the destruction and waste of war, and not sufficiently educated to understand that you don't get rid of evil simply by holding aloof from it. He has now decided that this is a war of ideas, a civil war in which men fight not because they are members of rival nations, but because they will lose the very right to hold and express opinions if Germany wins. In *Let There Be Liberty* A. P. Herbert is not at his sparkling best, but he does a sound service in explaining that even our present press is infinitely better than a totalitarian gramophone, while Parliament is more valuable than ever in wartime, and that reporters who love pointing out that on this or that occasion there were only a handful of Members in the House, completely misunderstand the functions and utility of an M.P. A. P. Herbert's weakness is that he himself finds political liberty so adequate a creed that he cannot imagine that any Englishmen would hesitate to die for it. He has no notion that liberty may seem a middle-class luxury to a slum population that waits with inadequate shelter for bombs to fall upon it. A similar criticism may be directed against J. R. Clynes, who constantly tells us that he is not complacent, but who is so impressed with the contrast between the lot of the worker two generations ago (when he first went into a factory as a small boy of ten), and that of the worker to-day that he assumes that the working-class will be sure that social democracy is worth dying for. Broadly he is right, it is true that the rights, won largely by Trade Union action, the new social and health services, workmen's compensation, the opportunities of education—it is true that these were unimaginable to the nineteenth century. Mr. Clynes does not consider the argument that these advances are likely all to be taken away when capitalism can no longer afford them. He is not arguing a philosophy; he describes quite simply and in very moving terms what life was like when he began work and urges that the difference between the advancing social democracy and the Nazi horror is justification for any war. The result is a good pamphlet.

Add up all these points of view—the Social Democrat, the Liberal, the artist, and man of letters, the Catholic and Protestant, and we see why Britain is in fact and not only in propaganda a nation united for this particular struggle. The weakness of the series so far is perhaps that it does not include the imperialist case for the war which, in the minds of many of our leaders, is far the more real case than the idealistic points of view embodied in these pamphlets. The most distinguished of these pamphlets is, as one might expect, that of E. M. Forster who begins by the honest statement that his pamphlet is propaganda. He ends by hoping, modestly and reasonably, that after the bad times in front of us, there may come a time of rejoicing when we shall see that all has not been in vain. "There are moments when each of us, however feeble, can feel within himself the strong hopes of the human race, and see beyond his personal death its renaissance, and the restoration of delight."

TOM PAINE

STONE

Purbeck Shop. By ERIC BENFIELD. *Cambridge University Press.* 12s. 6d.

The case for the Romantic Pessimists rests very largely on assuming the superior happiness of the old craftsmen over modern industrial workers. George Sturt in *The Wheelwright's Shop* put it at its plainest.

> No higher wage, no income, will buy for men that satisfaction which of old—until machinery made drudges of them—streamed into their muscles all day long from close contact with iron, timber, clay, wind and wave, horse-strength. It tingled up in the niceties of touch, sight, scent. The very ears unawares received it, as when the plane went singing over the wood, or the exact chisel went tapping in (under the mallet) to the hard oak with gentle sound. But these intimacies are over. Although they have so much more leisure men can now taste little solace in life, of the sort that skilled handwork used to yield them. . . . In what was once the wheelwright's shop, where Englishmen grew friendly with the grain of timber and with sharp tool, nowadays untrained youths wait upon machines, hardly knowing oak from ash or caring for the qualities of either. . . . Work is less and less pleasant to do—unless, perhaps, for the engineer or the electrician.

How far this is true is one of those things it is impossible to estimate, like the respective monetary value of an armament worker and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It depends not only upon the definition of words like "happiness" or "satisfaction"; it depends too on assumptions about the degree of satisfaction which usually inarticulate people do in fact derive from their work. Take, for instance, the case of quarrying with which Mr. Benfield deals in this book. Mr. Benfield is a Romantic Pessimist and considers that since concrete came in and the old quarrying began to go out—except for a short revival to meet the demand for suburban bird-baths—something infinitely valuable has been lost. The stone-worker whose lore was handed down from father to son was, in effect he suggests, an artist deriving the artist's satisfaction from the act of creation. It may be so. But it must remain an assumption—a romantic assumption. Of course, it is true of the Benfields, the Sturts, the William Morrises. But what of the average quarryman? As he crawls on hands and knees in the low narrow gallery and the damp clay, swinging his hammer from that cramped position with the ever-present risk of a block falling on his head, can we be so confident that he would not prefer some more expeditious explosive to do his work: even at the cost of not being so sure of bringing an individual judgment to bear on each piece? Mr. Benfield is downright in answering no. But then he is an extremist. Even such routine jobs as hauling, which one might suppose to be easier, quicker and better managed by a motor, Mr. Benfield prefers to see done by the old-fashioned method of a capstan and a horse; and the passage in which he sets out this argument—speaking of an engine as if it were still one of those surly machines from an Edwardian *Punch*—betrays the temper of his mind.

All the same there is probably something in the argument. A stone house or a craftsman's chair are likely to be better objects than their mass-produced counterpart. For we are in the

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turn-over and have not yet learned to make the best of new materials and new methods. Equally we are in the turn-over in the matter of personal relationships, and it is probably true that the paternalism of the Wheelwright's Shop or the Guild-Socialism of the Stoneworkers' Company were more satisfactory than the impersonalism of finance-capitalism. But we cannot turn the stream up-hill and the romantic pessimists only distract us from getting it into the right channel.

The publishers of *Purbeck Shop*, by bracketing it with Sturt's *The Wheelwright's Shop* in a series which they call the Cambridge Craftsmen Books, force the comparison; and that is rather unfortunate for Mr. Benfield. Sturt's book was a minor classic: his lucid and warm prose convinced in spite of reason; the smell of the friendly woods he described with such delight comes out of his pages and evokes a nostalgic reminiscence of the older England. Mr. Benfield is less deft with words than he was no doubt with his stone, and it is often difficult to feel one's way through his technical terms. Nor has he the same eye for a scene or a character. Stone, in any case, is a drier, a less animated subject.

But if we forget the comparison, there is much that is curious and delightful in *Purbeck Shop*. After reading it you will observe your window-ledge or the marble of your church pillars or the street-curbing or even your neighbour's bird-bath with a renewed interest. The mysteries of any craft are perennially fascinating. There are good chapters on "catching legs," which means propping up the tunnel roof, on the solitary pleasure of working underground, on the use of stone-cutting tools and on the different kinds of building stone and the uses to which they are put. There are some glimpses, too, of the vanished past which are pleasingly quaint. I especially liked the nice dignity of the quarryman of thirty years ago who went to his work in top-hat and tails and, in rain, with his umbrella proudly up; and the old man whose beard got caught beneath a particularly heavy block as his sons had laboured to put it in place. Nothing would persuade them to move it another inch and they left him the flame of a candle with which to extricate himself.

T. C. WORSLEY

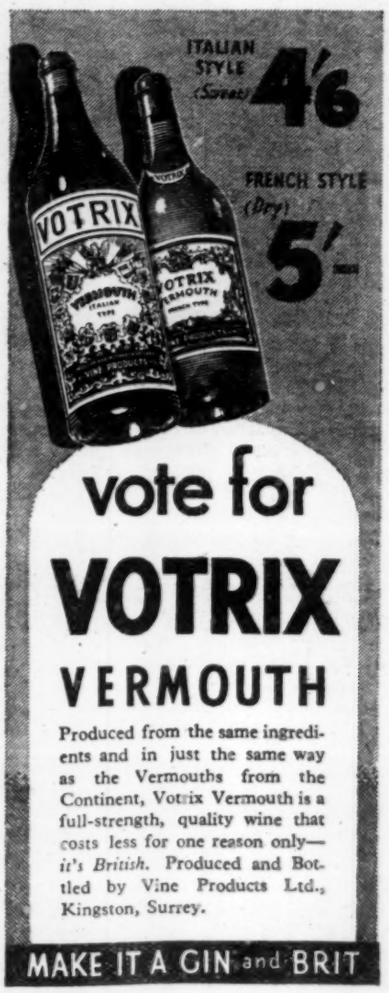
ANSWERS TO HITLER

We Make History. By ROBERT ZILLER. *Allen and Unwin.* 5s.

Long before the first of Hitler's aeroplanes appeared over London he had bombed us with rhetoric. Punctually at 9.20 during the dark evenings there would come the drone of Haw-Haw; and in Hitler's own screams from the Sportpalast we first heard the screaming bomb. The effect of that invasion—words dropped into a vacuum of waiting—remains undetermined; but one's impression is that it was more than half failure. This failure—if I am right in thinking it that—must be set down less to organised resistance than to our national tendency to sidestep propaganda, our own included. The Englishman has traditionally a number of devices for meeting calamity. One is to deny its existence altogether—foolhardy, but at times in past wars successful; another is to tolerate and even humour the threat, whatever it may be, and by accommodating it to make survival easier. We no longer stick pins in the image of our enemy; we treat him, half-contemptuously, half-affectionately, as a mascot. "Little ole Hitler'll be over to-night"—that is the sort of attitude which still, despite over-reporting in the newspapers, comes instinctively to many Cockneys; and it extends to the more self-conscious banter of Mr. Harold Nicolson's "That ingenious man, Herr Hitler." How far that attitude can be undermined by new methods of propaganda, by fiercer Blitzkriegs—to what extent, for example, our detachment hangs on the insularity we no longer enjoy—no one, of course, can possibly say. Under-statement is a private and defensive technique opposed now to more positive if clumsy methods; so long as it remains spontaneous and does not harden into a public façade, its advantages are obvious. But there are drawbacks. By consistently understating a situation one may grow reluctant to accept a plain statement of it; by whittling down one's emotions one may cease to feel truly at all. One reads the papers, one listens to the news; a hundred and eighty-five Nazi planes come crashing down in a day, and the number is set up like a cricket score. But the enemy score, too: so many of our airmen lost, so many hospitals and streets of houses bombed, so many civilians killed, maimed, turned adrift. And that doesn't register on the sporting level; that isn't cricket. We have no words, in our vocabulary of joking indifference, for the tragedy on our own doorstep.

When, here and there, the uniformed attitude of grin-and-bear-it has been broken through, we have had resounding successes. The situation of the last few months has produced our first real propaganda of the war. Mr. Churchill's speeches, Mr. Priestley's talks on the wireless, *Men of the Lightship*: all these, in their different ways, have been as English as Cheapside, and have struck down to deeper roots of humanity. The final answer to Hitler's cult of the Lie is men everywhere getting up to proclaim the Truth as they see it. Mr. Churchill's view of the Truth and Mr. Priestley's, your view and mine, may not always coincide, but it agrees on one thing, and that is the truth about Hitler.

I look forward to the Chaplin film, due, I believe, in November, as the best possible reply of the



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common man to forces which at the moment seem overwhelming. The fact that *The Great Dictator* is not in the Nazi sense or our sense propaganda should make it all the more effective. Writing in the American magazine, *Look*, Mr. Chaplin says of his film: "To me the funniest thing in the world can be the ridicule of phoneys and stuffed shirts in high places. The bigger the phoney you have to work on, the better chance for a funny picture, and it would be difficult to find another phoney as big as Hitler." *The Great Dictator* has, of course, been banned in advance in Germany and presumably everywhere in the countries under Nazi domination. It should be shown as widely and as soon as possible in cinemas throughout England. Could not the Government come to an arrangement with Mr. Chaplin and distributors here for the film to be generally released as soon as it reaches London? An exclusive West-End run of many months seems to me, in the circumstances, criminal. I haven't, I may say, seen so much as a foot of *The Great Dictator*, but from what I know of the creator of *The Gold Rush* and *Modern Times* I believe that this new film would have a soaring effect on the badly bombed such as our propaganda machine could not achieve if it racked its brains till Doomsday.

The Government would welcome, you might suppose, any outside propaganda, however slight or unassuming, which our own experts are unable to supply. Robert Ziller, for example, has produced in *We Make History* a brilliant sketch-book of the Nazi leaders and some of their victims such as no English artist would have had the heart or the experience to attempt. In its way, which mingles portrait and caricature with a remarkable certainty of style, this collection of drawings gives us the best picture of the Nazi terror I have seen. Herr Ziller, in fact, has performed a valuable service to the country in which he is now living. And what have we offered him in return? An art gallery, a room in a town hall in which to exhibit these drawings which express so much better than do we ourselves what we all feel about Nazi tyrants? Nothing of the sort. He is locked away—you had guessed?—in an internment camp.

Bitter irony, realistic contempt, hatred, indignation and pity: these are emotions not provided for by the orthodox Cockney and Public School spirit, and Herr Ziller gives them release. Turn to his drawing of Hitler, "Our Führer thinks for us." He has caught the leader in one of his ceremonial attitudes, standing sullen and hatless, with chin down, and hands clasped in front—posing, it would seem, grimly and untidily, for the Man of Destiny. The riding breeches and shirt, the huge Iron Cross, the shabby lock of hair, the scowling comedian's moustache, combine to give one a most vivid realisation of Hitler's presence and the mean pomp which accompanies his spasms of cruelty. On the opposite page a few of Hitler's well-known utterances are gathered. "I object strongly when a foreign statesman gets up and says I break my word." "I am the strongest man whom Germany has ever had, and whoever opposes me will be crushed." On other pages one pauses over Himmler, chinless and pince-nezed, the coldest and perhaps the most repulsive face in this gallery; Papen staring out of the close-set, frightened eyes of a monkey; Dr. (Strength through Joy) Ley, a drooping reformed drunkard; Roehm, the perfect brute bully; Baldur von Schirach, Reich Youth Leader, a fatty in hiker's dress, with a luscious squirm; and the others of the gang, better and less known. (But where, among these grubby degenerates, is that Aryan hero of whom we have heard so much, the new Siegfried?) The effect of the drawings is ironically offset by the often contradictory Nazi texts on the accompanying page. Some of these we have met before but they bear repeating. Goebbels: "With satisfaction we know that the truth will always come out on top; we give nothing, then, but the naked truth." Goering: "I am humane. You should not laugh. I really am humane." In addition there are half a dozen sketches of the victims of Hitler's fury: a row of hanged men, the shaven head of a girl persecuted because she refused to leave her Jewish lover, a worker shot while "trying to escape," an old man—Professor Theodor Lessing—murdered at his desk. The last picture shows merely two hands clutching the air. In a few twisted lines are resumed the dignity, pathos and terror of a remarkable book.

G. W. STONIER

English Economic History, Mainly Since 1700. By C. R. FAY. *Heffer.* 5s.

There is always something odd about Mr. Fay's books, but this is odder than ever. Indeed, Mr. Fay himself expresses the fear that it "may appear rather disjointed" to his readers, explaining that this was less felt by the students to whom he delivered the lectures on which the book is based. Anyone who goes to it expecting a straightforward account of English economic development will meet with a surprise, for most of the familiar incidents of such a narrative are not mentioned. What the reader will find is a series of observations on particular problems of English economic history—especially on problems not dealt with in most textbooks but recently illuminated by monographs or biographies, to which Mr. Fay frequently refers. The effect is anecdotal, and exceedingly disjointed; but Mr. Fay's gleanings are often interesting and his comments as shrewd as they are startlingly discursive. If you are *interested* in economic history, get this book: if you only want to learn the subject, let Mr. Fay alone.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 554

Set by Fred Oyster

Everyone likes talking about his favourite characters in fiction; but one hears less of the *bête noir*. Competitors are invited, then, to discuss—abusively, analytically, indirectly, fantastically, as they choose—the character in fiction they most detest. No restrictions except in length—250 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor on Monday, September 30th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 552

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Most competitors will remember Clough's poem, *The Latest Decalogue*, which begins:

> Thou shalt have only one God, who
> Would be at the expense of two?

and contains the well-known lines:

> Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive
> Officiously to keep alive.

The usual prizes are offered for a new version of it to be called *The Totalitarian Decalogue*.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

If I had followed the stars more trustfully, I should not have set this competition for Blitz week-end. Few competitors were likely to have had a Clough on the shelves of their Air Raid Shelter.

Besides, something more escapist might have been more suitable. However, in spite of the obstacles there was a reasonably large entry; but may I remind competitors that posts to London work less smoothly than before? (P.S.—Although we relaxed the strictness of the date, a large batch arrived this week too late to be included in the judging.)

The Victorian pluto-democracy which Clough was aiming at provided, as one competitor pointed out, somewhat better sport. Totalitarianism is a sitting target allowing so close an approach that there is a danger of its being mutilated in the shooting. Miss Hilda Sargent (age 16) peppered the target:

Thou shalt not kill too feebly when
The foeman can strike back again,
Adultery shall bear no brand;
All fathers serve the Fatherland

. . . .

Last covet not, but don't neglect
Your weaker neighbour to protect.

Stanley J. Sharpless had some good lines although a shade too Semitic for Reich tastes:

You shall have only one God: Me,
Who am Jehovah's nominee

. . . .

Don't forget the sabbath day
Say Abba Fuhrer when you pray

. . . .

Don't covet what your neighbour's got;
Report him and annex the lot.

Towanbucket is always deft:

Swear no great oaths by God on high
They rarely reinforce the lie.
Keep Sunday holy: it's confessed
Slaves work the better for a rest.
Thou shalt not steal but may'st arrange
By legal process for exchange.
Bear secret witness, false or true
To what thy neighbours say or do.

E. W. Fordham with his delightful beginning was a runner-up:

One God alone can damn or pardon
His home address is Berchtesgaden
To him shall all thy worship be—
But pay respects to Hermann G.
The Sabbath thou shalt always use
For cursing or maltreating Jews.

. . . .

Remember when thou liest that
A *little* lie falls rather flat.

No entry seemed clearly superior, so I recommend that the prizes be pooled and divided between Sir Robert Witt and J. P. Marriott.

Besides Myself, thy only God shall be
The State, and then, of course, "the State, that's Me."
No graven images adore, for sculpture palls;
So hang My painted portrait on thy walls.
Be warned, take not in vain the Leader's name,
But swear to "follow my leader" all the same.
Keep Holy Day the day that I shall choose,
But not, I beg, the Sabbath of the Jews.
Honour thy parents who, by copulation
Added a Unit to the population.
Kill not, unless in Cause Totalitarian
You meet a man who was not born an Aryan.
Break not the vows that guard the marriage-bed;
Divorce, abort or sterilise instead.
Steal not, at least no petty peculation;
Call it "Expansion of a Growing Nation."
Only denounce the enemies of the State;
I provide camps where they can concentrate.
Tolerance, Freedom, Ease thou shalt not covet;
Or even Peace—the State stands high above it.

SIR ROBERT WITT

God and myself do thus decree:—
There are no Gods but God and Me;
Subversive images are banned,
But those that honour me may stand;
Revere my name; you'll go to jail
For using it without a "Hail!";
The pure-of-race may aptly use
The Sabbath for ill-treating Jews;
Honour your parents, but report
All comments of a doubtful sort;
Killing by ones is still a crime,
But killing thousands is sublime;
Adulterers will win our grace,
If fertile and of proper race;
Rob not your country's precious hoard
By smuggling currency abroad;
Bear not false witness—save what tends
To further patriotic ends;
Covet such gains of other Powers
As profitably might be ours.

J. P. MARRIOTT

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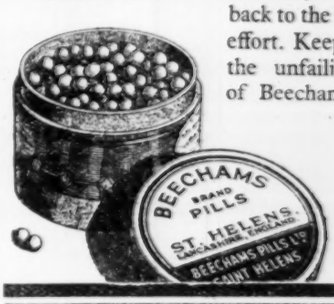

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